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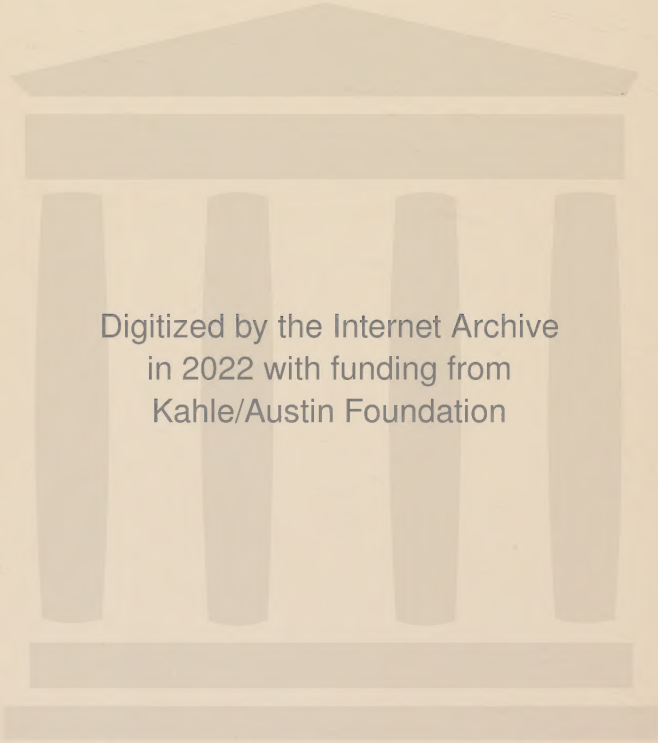
WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS



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WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS

BOOKS BY

ROBERT RUSSA MOTON

FINDING A WAY OUT

WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS

WHAT · THE
NEGRO · THINKS

BY · ROBERT · RUSSA · MOTON

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FOREWORD

THIS volume aims to place on record some facts concerning a phase of the Negro problem of which, up to this time, little has been known outside of the race; that is, what the Negro, himself, thinks of the experiences to which he is subjected because of his race and colour. The subject has lately excited a growing interest, especially among those who would approach the problem of the Negro's presence in America with sympathy and understanding.

Not all the facts are or can be recorded here, but what is recorded is typical of the thoughts that go through the minds of Negroes in all parts of our country, regardless of their particular shade of colour, their place of residence, their type of education, their economic condition, their social environment, or their own philosophy for the solution of the difficulties that they encounter. The book indicates in particular the things in which the Negro is discriminated against, and aims to tell those of other races who are interested in the subject something of how it feels to be constantly subjected to such discriminations, and to

reveal the thoughts of the Negro inspired by those feelings whenever he has occasion to reflect on his experiences.

The book is not intended as propaganda. No attempt is made to make the record as lurid as possible,however much there may be to substantiate such a course. Extremes are purposely omitted from the narrative. It is not intended to incite resentment and stimulate animosities. It aims, rather, "to speak the truth in love"; it aims, as it were, to describe the Negro's pains, to tell an interested public where the hurt is. If, in the process, the sensibilities of some may be wounded, it must be laid, not to intent, but to that unavoidable consequence that sometimes accompanies the revelation of unpleasant truths. Some things recorded may appear to be of slight consequence to those who do not experience them, but to those of us who journey along life's way to the almost daily accompaniment of such experiences they are like the gravels which somehow get into one's shoe, and which, though they may be small in themselves, yet set up such irritation and discomfort as not only to make the journey unpleasant, but to delay progress substantially and ultimately to prevent it altogether.

The book is written in the belief that the vast majority of those people in America who are not discriminated against in this way are really ignorant both of the nature and the extent of the discrimination practised against Negroes in some degree in all sections of our country, and

that many of them have been misled by the Negro's silence on this subject to believe that he is not only complaisant but contented and even happy under existing conditions.

It is written also in the hope that with such enlightenment as this volume may bring an increasing number will be moved to investigate, at first hand, the conditions to which attention is here directed and lend themselves to the effort that is being made to-day, not only by Negroes but by some of the finest and noblest spirits in our land of other races, to give to the Negro that equality of opportunity which is the pride of America. If such a result is achieved it will justify the undertaking that was begun with some trepidation and compensate for any possible misunderstandings that may inadvertently grow out of it.

With such a purpose in view it is dedicated to those thousands of my own race who for years have been inarticulate in the midst of their suffering, and to those noble and beautiful spirits of my own and other races who have with the greatest courage and utmost unselfishness given their very lives for the cultivation of a brotherhood among all men which is the finest flower of the Christian spirit.

THE AUTHOR.

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WHAT THE NEGRO THINKS

Chapter I

"I KNOW THE NEGRO"

PERHAPS no single phrase has been more frequently used in discussing the race problem in America than the familiar declaration, "I know the Negro." It has been commonly employed to support the opinions and sustain the convictions of large numbers of white men and women who are zealous to defend existing customs and practices which give to the Negro a different status in social and civic life from that occupied by his white neighbour.

Negroes have always met this remark with a certain faint, knowing smile. Their common experience has taught them that as a matter of fact there are vast reaches of Negro life and thought of which white people know nothing whatever, even after long contact with them, sometimes on the most intimate terms.

There is, however, a certain amount of truth in the assertion. Every white man in the South has some knowledge of Negro life gained at first hand, sometimes from playmates of childhood, as often from contact with serv-

ants in the home, and more frequently with labourers and employees on the farms and in industrial plants, and with janitors and porters in shops and stores; for the great majority of Negroes who work for others are to be found in the employ of white people; though it is also true that the majority of Negroes in gainful occupations are working for themselves. This means that white people, particularly of the South, do have direct contact with a large section of the Negro race under circumstances which permit of direct observation. Such white people are naturally impressed with the authenticity of their personal observations and thus are convinced of the essential correctness of their own impressions. Their error lies in assuming that they are familiar with the whole range of Negro life and every type of Negro character.

What most of these people do not realize is the fact that there are certain phases of their life to which Negroes rarely ever, and if so, very reluctantly, admit white people; and such as are so admitted hardly boast of their knowledge. Still less is it realized that there is an increasingly large percentage of the Negro race with whom white people have no such intimate contacts whatever, who, as a matter of fact, move in a sphere confined almost entirely to their own people, with only an occasional digression into the avenues of trade and communication operated and conducted by whites.

Negroes as a class traverse the paths of life among whites to a much greater extent than do whites among Negroes. A Negro housemaid, for instance, becomes familiar in a very short time with practically all phases of the life of her mistress. Not only is she familiar, as a matter of fact, with the contents and uses of every room in the house, and the disposition of her mistress's most valued possessions, but she also comes in time to learn the habits of every member of the household, the topics of their conversation, the peculiarities, faults, and virtues of their friends and acquaintances; and, what is more to the point, in many and many a case these servants become the confidantes of their employers, to whom many secrets are divulged and many confessions made—all in the strictest confidence.

Very, very seldom does any white mistress ever come to know her Negro servants so intimately. Few ever visit the home of their cook or butler or nurse, unless it be in case of emergency, such as serious illness or death, perhaps. Or if otherwise they do come to the street where their servant lives, they must then be directed to the particular house they seek, and usually remain without while some accommodating passer-by calls to the door the man or woman, boy or girl, whom they wish to see. Very often they are not encouraged to enter. Such a Negro servant would hesitate to invite her mistress into her home lest it be counted a presumption; or, as often as

not, because it is not such a house as befits either her estimate of herself or of the high estate of her mistress.

For the same reason these servants are not quick to divulge confidences to their employers. Many Negroes have not yet got beyond the fear of slavery days that the revelation of more intimate facts concerning themselves to white people may at some time place them in the power of these same people to their disadvantage. In this they are simply human. No one of us will reveal anything to anyone if we think it may be used to our disadvantage. And in the courts this is recognized as an unassailable right: hence, a witness may refuse to testify if the answer may tend to incriminate him.

Now white people generally feel that they have nothing to fear from their Negro servants who may learn the details of their lives, inasmuch as they are not in a position to use their information to their employer's disadvantage. Indeed, they often feel a deal of comfort in opening their minds to such of their servants who show themselves capable of understanding and sympathy; and frequently they seek and accept their advice, particularly in matters of personal relationships. And one seldom, if ever, hears a white man or woman complain that their confidence so placed has been betrayed.

In recent years the increase of professional men among Negroes has also tended more and more to reduce the range of the white man's acquaintance with Negro life.

Lawyers, doctors, dentists have a more or less ready access to the intimate phases of the life of their clients. As these services are rendered Negroes more and more by members of their own race the chances of the white man to know the Negro are diminishing. It is also true that in some cases where white people have the chance to know their Negro servants, clients, and patrons they are not at all interested to know more than the matter of immediate professional interest, and sometimes even this is not pursued with care or concern.

From these natural causes the white man's knowledge of Negro life is diminishing and the rate is accelerated by the present-day policy of segregation. This operates practically to make an ever widening gulf between the two races which leaves each race more and more ignorant of the other. Without contact there cannot be knowledge; segregation reduces the contacts, and so knowledge and understanding decrease. With decreasing knowledge comes increasing distrust and suspicion, and these in turn engender prejudice and even hatred. So a vicious circle is established whose ultimate effect, unless counteracted, must be a separation of the races into more or less opposing camps, with results as disastrous to the spirit of American institutions as to the genuine progress of both races.

There is, however, a certain significance in the expression so frequently used by white men, "I know the Negro," that is apt to be overlooked, though it gives

the greatest validity to the assertion. It expresses the mental attitude of a type which has had more or less of contact with Negroes, frequently on a large scale. It falls from the lips of plantation managers, merchant-planters, sawmill and turpentine farm managers, railroad section and chain gang bosses, all of whom have very practical relations with large numbers of Negroes, mostly unskilled labourers.

When one of these days he "knows the Negro" it means that he has had them under his control for very practical purposes and has come to a pretty wide and thorough knowledge of the habits, mannerisms, foibles, weaknesses, defects, deficiencies, virtues, and excellencies of this particular type of the race. It means, too, that he is thoroughly familiar with the ethical, social, and moral code that obtains among white men of his class in dealing with Negroes of this class and under the conditions obtaining in these fields. In such a declaration he means to say that he knows how to get the required amount of work from any given group of such Negroes, that he knows the conditions under which they will work best, the amount of pressure they will stand, what abuse they will submit to, what they will resent, under what conditions they will remain cheerful, when they will become sullen, what and when to pay them, what food to provide, what housing to furnish, what holidays to recognize, and what indulgences to grant. Such a man knows, too, to what extent

public opinion in his own race will support him in his relations with his men. He is familiar with all the local prejudices and practices involved in race adjustments; he is adept according to these in "keeping the Negro in his place"; and above all else he can be counted on to be firm and resolute in all his dealings with black folk of every type and class.

To know the Negro thus is a real attainment. The possession of such knowledge is a marketable commodity. Wherever large numbers of Negroes are to be dealt with, such an individual is an asset, however questionable its value. Such men were frequently put in charge of Negro troops, especially of labour battalions, during the World War. It was felt that men of this type would get best results from their units; but anyone who talked with Negro soldiers, especially those who went overseas, will quickly perceive that there was much that these men did not know and apparently did not learn about Negroes. The record of Negro labour battalions is a testimonial of high efficiency. The critical emergency made it both necessary and possible to secure maximum results everywhere. But even in France Negro soldiers were not free from the pressure of white domination, which is everywhere such a factor of Negro life in America. The Negro is at all times conscious of the virtual solidarity of white control in American life; and the same is true of every white man and of almost every white person.

In sections where there is any considerable number of Negroes every white man can count upon the practically solid support of all his race in any disagreement he may have with a Negro. In a few individuals it may not be active, but in all such cases he can certainly count on its being passive. Even little white boys know this and frequently assume an insolence toward adult Negroes that would be thoroughly ludicrous were it not for the fact that it has widespread popular approval. Only in the rarest instances nowadays is a white child upbraided for insolence or impertinence toward an adult Negro.

Thus a great part of "knowing the Negro" is a thorough understanding of the operations of this type of interracial sentiment and of how to employ it in managing the Negro and "keeping him in his place." Where firmness is required rather than sympathy, where ruthlessness is the order of the day rather than consideration, a white man who "knows the Negro" is the most effective agent procurable. What he *doesn't* know about the Negro is the factor that produces the race problem.

Now, Negroes feel that any person outside the race is simply deceiving himself when he professes to know them, for the reason that the very circumstances recited operate effectively to prevent such knowledge.

The Negro does not pretend that there is anything mysterious about his people, but simply that the very attitude of the white man himself prevents his having that

thorough knowledge not only of the circumstances of Negro life, but less so of his inner thoughts and feelings.

Even in slavery the Negro took great pains to conceal his resentments and his longings. This habit of mind is recorded in the phrase still current in Negro speech, "talkin' at the big gate," which alludes to a Negro's vociferous and voluble complaints and protests against ill-treatment when far removed from the "big house" as compared with his humility and even obsequiousness in his master's presence.

To-day Negroes, young and old, resent the assertion that they were contented as slaves, which is prima facie evidence, they would say, that the person so declaring does not know them. In the presence of his master the slave indeed had very little to say either about his wrongs or his aspirations and hopes; his songs, the "spirituals," were the vehicle for expressing the Negro's deepest emotions, sometimes under the cloak of religious sentiments, as when he sang:

"I'm so glad trouble don' las' always."

"I'm goin' tell God how you served me."

"Nobody knows de trouble I see,
Nobody knows but Jesus.
Sometimes you see me goin' 'long so
Oh yes, Lord!
I have my trials here below,
Oh yes, Lord!"

Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Negro poet, makes an ante-bellum preacher embellish his sermon on the delivery of the Hebrew children from their bondage in Egypt with the injunction:

> Now don't run and tell yo' mastahs
> Dat I's preachin' discontent.

All of which reflects the persistent effort of the Negro at the concealment of his thoughts and feelings.

The knowledge of the anti-slavery agitation came quickly to the slaves in all sections. Information was passed among them by word of mouth but under the guise of the commonest expressions which had come to have special significance in this connection. If a slave coming back from town greeted a fellow servant with the declaration, "Good-mornin', Sam, yo' look mighty greasy this mornin'," that meant that he had picked up some fresh information about the prospects of freedom which would be divulged later on. In that particular section the word for freedom in the slave code was "grease," and conversation on the subject was carried on even in the presence of their master and mistress with the most innocent allusion to this simple article of household use.

Many old people to-day are still controlled by the whispering habit of the days when it was necessary to guard against eavesdroppers by conveying information in whispers even when there was no one in sight to over-

hear the conversation. This habit persisted for a long time after emancipation, as a reflection of the pains which the slaves took to conceal their thoughts from all those who, they had reason to believe, would be unsympathetic toward them. They went even further than that under the stress of circumstances and sometimes deliberately proceeded to deceive their masters as to their real feelings and thoughts.

I recall the story which I heard over and over again in my boyhood from the leading characters themselves, of a deacon and a preacher among the coloured people of the county where I was born, who were summoned to the church along with all the people of both races in the surrounding counties to pray for the success of the Confederate cause. This was just after the battle of Gettysburg and at the culmination of a series of reverses to the Confederate forces. The white ministers prayed, as did also various laymen of the congregation; then it was thought appropriate to call on the leaders among the coloured people. They first called on one of the deacons to lead in prayer. He responded by praying simply "that the Lord's will be done," and in a rather neutral way left the responsibility on the shoulders of God as to which of the two sides should win. Then they called on Brother Armstead Berkeley, the pastor of the Negro Baptist Church, a man of wonderful voice and a magnetic personality, a strong man in any group of people. Lifting up his voice, he was

direct and outspoken in his prayer: "O Lord," he said, "point the bullet of the Confederate guns right straight at the heart of the Yankees; make our men victorious on the battlefield and send them home in health and strength to join their people in peace and prosperity."

There were easily ten thousand people present, for the situation was very tense and serious, and everyone was listening intently. Imagine the consternation created by such a prayer among the Negro people present that day. It was hard for them to restrain their anxiety and indignation until after the white folks had gone; but at the first opportunity his deacons quickly gathered around him and challenged Brother Berkeley on his bold desertion of the cause of his people in praying for the success of the Confederate army. Instantly came the reply in all seriousness; "Don't worry, children; the Lord knew what I was talking about," and everybody was satisfied. They understood exactly and immediately all the reservations that accompanied that prayer.

In spite of emancipation Negroes still feel it necessary to conceal their thoughts from white people. In speech and in manner they may convey the impression of concurrence and contentment when at heart they feel quite otherwise. In these recent days the psychologists have come to call this a "defense mechanism," and some are sure that it is the only thing that enables the Negro to survive in his contact with the white man. Negroes are some-

times warned, even now, that they dare not manifest any resentment toward mistreatment; that the safest policy to pursue is to acquiesce in the judgment of those white people who have manifested a friendly attitude toward them and appeal to their consciences for the redressing of wrongs and correction of abuses. Small wonder that the Negro is so generally secretive.

So it is that there is a whole region of thought and feeling among them of similar character with which those outside the race are wholly unacquainted. A large part of the Negro's humour is based on these reserves in his attitude toward white people. There is a play by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward called *Porgy* based on Negro life in Charleston, which takes its title from the leading character. There is a scene where an officious-looking white man comes into "Catfish Alley" looking for the hero. No one knows "Porgy," never even heard of him, till the man about to depart says he had just come to help him in his difficulty, when knowledge and intelligence burst forth on every countenance and a dozen voices exclaim in crescendo, "Oh, Porgy! You're lookin' for Porgy! Yes, we know him," and a dozen hands are stretched forth to show the visitor where Porgy lives.

"Know the Negro!" When a white man boasts of it he simply discloses how little he does know about this race.

Chapter II

KNOWING THE WHITE MAN

THE Negro has a far better chance of knowing the white man than the latter has of knowing the Negro. As cited in the preceding chapter, the white man has voluntarily admitted the Negro into every phase of his life from birth to death, from play to religion. Those whose families afforded the privilege are proud in their boast of a "black mammy"; and it sometimes happens that those who did not enjoy such a privilege have found it worth while to claim one as a badge of aristocracy and as a means of self-commendation to the favourable estimate of black folks and in some degree also to white folks. Black servitors have over and over again been entrusted with the management of their masters' affairs. No less a person than Jefferson Davis, late and only President of the Confederacy, grew to maturity while his father's plantation was under the management, in every detail of its business, of one of his slaves—James Montgomery.

Montgomery was in fact a practical civil engineer, having been trained in association with his former mas-

ter's son in Virginia before being sold into Mississippi. Many white men, even to-day, have in their employ Negroes whom they have trained to handle every phase of their business and of which they are the practical managers. For many years the Patchen-Wilkes Stock Farm of Lexington, Kentucky (owned by the late W. E. D. Stokes), was under the direct and official management of a Negro, Ed Willis, who achieved a world-wide reputation in racing circles through the development of "Peter the Great," one of the greatest stallions ever produced.

It was only a few years ago that a distinguished bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church declared with pride and satisfaction to a Negro audience that he had settled no important question in his life about which he had any doubt without submitting it, so long as she was available, to his old "black mammy," for whose judgment in matters of conduct he had as high respect as for that of any person he ever knew, not excepting his parents. Negroes and white people have played, worked, fought, struggled, and suffered together since the black man's entry into this country; and segregation laws to the contrary notwithstanding, those same relations continue to a degree of which few are aware except those immediately concerned.

So the Negro is in touch with every stratum and grade of white society, from the worst to the best. In these relations the white man tends more and more to lay aside reserve and let those around him see him as he is. At the

same time the Negro cultivates a reserve which is not only his own defense but serves to commend him to the esteem of his employer. As a matter of fact, this reserve is a part of that "knowing his place" which is highly commended in everyone who serves where personal contacts are necessary, and is particularly approved in the Negro.

This knowledge of white persons by the individual Negro is almost universal where there is any considerable Negro population, for there is a point of contact with coloured people in the career of the large majority of white Americans. But conditions as described limit the contact for the most part, in the case of the white man, to just one phase of Negro life or one type of Negro. On the other side of the line, however, the individual Negro makes contact with a great many people of the white race, and with various types. His landlord represents one type, the insurance agent another, the policeman, the mail carrier, the ticket agent in the station, the conductor on the railroad, the cashier at the bank, all represent different phases of life among white people with which almost every individual Negro has more or less frequent contact. To these may be added the contacts in home, club, and office to which this same Negro is admitted, in the capacity of a servant, where the range of his knowledge is considerably extended. In this way Negroes come to know every type of whites from the lowest to the highest, the "quality folks" as well as the "po' white trash." And so

well does the individual know these types that he can tell almost immediately by speech, manner, or appearance to which class each belongs.

Now this intimate knowledge of white people is not confined to exceptional individuals. Because of the arrangement of our social system large numbers of Negroes have this wide range of contacts. Where one white man knows at most a few Negroes, the average Negro knows a great many white people, the greater number of whom are found in the higher social spheres. Mr. Doe's acquaintance with Negroes is limited practically to his own servants and employees; but these same Negroes know all the white people who come to the Doe home and place of business, as do also all the servants in the homes of the Doe social set. What they do not learn about these people from the servants in these other homes, they learn from direct observation and from the remarks of their employers and their occasional guests.

To a greater or less extent every class of Negroes has some contact with whites of almost every class, but there are certain classes of whites whose contact with Negroes is limited to a single class—either the labouring class or the servant class, and sometimes both. Beyond that there is a type of Negro already referred to, whom the majority of whites never see and consequently do not know. They own their own homes, so the white landlord does not see them; they carry insurance with a Negro insurance com-

pany, so no white collector comes to the door; their groceryman is a coloured man; they travel by auto rather than by street car or train; as a rule they live in the segregated residence districts; their physician, lawyer, dentist, and often their banker is a Negro. As a result of all this, there is a constantly diminishing contact between the corresponding classes of the two races, which for the whites as a whole is fast approaching the zero point.

From such contacts as he has, however, the habit of the white man is to group all Negroes in the same class. It is not so very long since the white man expressed this idea in one of his popular songs "All coons look alike to me," which merely reflected his limited contact with the race. But Negroes of every type recognize at least three distinct types of white people: first, the upper stratum of white society recognized as the better class of white people, variously styled as "quality folks" or "first class people" or "real white folks"—in the vernacular, "sho nuff 'ristocrats"; at the other extremity are the "poor white trash" including "crackers," "red necks," or "sagers," according to the particular region considered. Between these is a third class recognized as "half strainers," that aspiring element risen from the lower class who, with some effort, affect the ways of the upper classes; who are at the same time the most aggressive in setting up racial discrimination. Toward each group the Negro maintains a definite and characteristic attitude.

There is, among Negroes as a whole, an unconcealed and unabashed admiration for the best white people—ofttimes referred to among the humbler classes as "quality white folks." For this they make no apology. For the Negro, as for others, they represent the highest attainment of wealth, culture, achievement, and refinement: they set the standard in manners as also in morals. Unless they have become embittered by some unusual experience, Negroes are generally proud of their contact and acquaintance with white people of this class, and as opportunity affords, without presumption, are glad to avail themselves of the advantage of such relations. As a class these white people are thoughtful and considerate toward the Negro as they are toward other persons, whether of equal or lower station. They do not alter their natural habit of gentility, courtesy and generosity either toward their servants or a casual acquaintance, for which reason they are held in high esteem everywhere, by all classes of all races. So also in their surroundings do they set standards which satisfy the ideals and tastes of the aspiring ones among this group so long unprivileged.

It is this class of the white race who have made the term "white" the hallmark of excellence so commonly used by Negroes, and appropriated by other whites for such advantage as it gives. It developed at a time when the black people had as yet no opportunity to cultivate standards among themselves. Their condition both as slaves

and freedmen limited their progress to the lowest levels: only white people could go on to unlimited attainment in education, skill, wealth, and culture. Quite naturally these achievements fixed the standards for blacks as well as for whites. Being confined entirely to the white race, it as naturally developed that the label "white" should serve to identify those standards universally among Negroes. As a matter of fact, the white race as a whole has itself accepted the tribute, but with the added assumption that the virtues implied by the term attach to the colour of the skin, the fallacy of which need hardly be pointed out to the readers of this volume.

But Negroes are themselves quite sensitive to any departure from this standard by which they gauge the white race: hence, the odiousness of the term "poor white trash." The idea undoubtedly developed in slavery days as suggested by the contrast between the privileged master class and the unprivileged, landless, propertyless, "educationless," free whites whose condition was in many respects ofttimes far more miserable than that of many slaves. There was a group of slaves on nearly every plantation, especially the larger ones, who benefited appreciably from close contact with the master's household, acquiring the manners of the "big house," absorbing some of its culture, ofttimes receiving specific instruction in letters as well as crafts; who were at times permitted to apply to their own advantage whatever benefits they

might gain from their superior abilities. Enjoying, as they often did, the confidence and esteem of these superior families, it was not unnatural that they should esteem their own position as superior to that of lower class whites; and so in response to the taunt of "Nigger! Nigger!" they fortified their own pride at the same time that they wounded their tormentor with the retort:

> I had a little dog,
> His name was Dash.
> I'd rather be a nigger
> Than po'h white trash.

Between these two classes of whites stands the "half strainers," a group emerging from the poverty and limitations of the poorer class but not yet arrived at the ease and assurance of the upper class. With this class Negroes identify those whites who, like themselves, are striving for better things but perhaps with considerable and more obvious effort. They seem to be at some pains to impress their retainers with their superiority; as a result they are often smiled upon even by their servants, and their errors and shortcomings observed and endured with complaisant tolerance: that is, when they do not evoke a scarcely veiled contempt. To this class Negroes would concede no superiority over themselves beyond such advantages as accrue through social custom from the mere possession of greater wealth and a white skin, for which latter the possessor is not in any way respon-

sible. It is among the two latter classes that the Negro finds the greatest amount of prejudice and from whom he meets with the greatest amount of opposition. He has always felt that the best white people, both South and North, could be counted among his friends; and in this he has not been often disappointed.

So it is that the Negro discriminates among white people and has always done so. A white skin is not to him, as many suppose, a thing to be venerated in itself. The Negro does recognize the superior advantages which white people as a class enjoy; he also has a wholesome regard for the racial solidarity of the whites, of which the individual white man is so quick to take advantage and before which the individual Negro is utterly helpless. But the label "white" is not and never has been sufficient to command his respect in and for itself.

There was a time when a large element of the Negro race associated superiority almost invariably with a white skin. It was felt that a white man just had to possess all the virtues which he claimed for himself, and that *black* correspondingly connoted inferiority. But this spell has been broken by two distinct developments—one of them the Negro's own excursions into fields of achievement previously occupied by the white man alone; and second, the failure of so many whites to manifest the superiority with which they would be credited.

It is interesting to note the process by which this change

in attitude has taken place. As an instance—it will probably be impossible for most white people to conceive of the strong reaction upon the entire Negro race from the achievement of the noted Negro pugilist, Jack Johnson, in knocking out Jim Jeffries in the prize ring at Reno, Nevada. This contest had been previously advertised far and wide by an element of the whites themselves as a demonstration of the physical superiority of the white race over the black race, with a confident prediction of the outcome. Jeffries himself had been referred to in sporting circles and heralded in the press as the "white hope"; and Negroes everywhere were much concerned as to the result. They were sure that a victory by Jeffries would tend to confirm this popular idea of the white man's superiority and give impetus to movements discriminating against their race, that were already in operation. And behind all this was the tendency, not unknown among some members of their own race, to accept at its face value this specious claim to racial superiority. But when Johnson was returned the winner, the spell of white supremacy in pugilism was definitely broken, and Negroes generally felt a certain new emancipation. Many white people at once became alarmed: they feared reprisals from the blacks; and in their panic they forbade even the transportation and showing of the pictures of the fight. A great wave of moral indignation over prize fighting swept the land—never before was its brutish-

ness so thoroughly and so passionately exposed. But these people did not understand. Negroes were not concerned to attack the white race in any way. What they felt, and that most keenly, was the propaganda that would make their race and colour odious, that would interpret these as always, everywhere, and *ipso facto,* the marks of inferiority. The decision at Reno was a repulse to deliberate and insidious propaganda that meant vastly more than the winning of a physical encounter: it was such a vindication of the Negro's own faith in himself and before the world as no later act of the champion of that hour could subvert. In consequence, Negroes generally feel that the race owes much to Jack Johnson, heavyweight prize fighter, for this demonstration, aside from any subsequent developments in his career.

Since then, as well as before, Negroes have from time to time demonstrated in many fields and by actual comparison—as in athletics, art, literature, science, and learning in all its branches—that a white skin is no title to claims of superiority and that a black skin does not necessarily debar its possessor from a fair share of the gifts which the Father of all has distributed among His children without discrimination. As yet, and it is to be hoped that it will never be otherwise, the Negro has not in turn laid serious claim to superiorities of his own, at least not such as would lead to discrimination against others. Roland Hayes, with all his notable achievements,

is just one more vindicator of his race in the process of removing the stigma of inferiority from the possession of a black skin.

More effective still, however, in dispelling the delusion of white superiority from the mind of the Negro is the conduct of the white man himself. For a long time the Negro had little in his own race with which to contravert the claims of those whites who felt themselves superior to all other races; but the failure of so many of the white race to live up to these standards and to substantiate this claim to superiority has operated most insidiously to beget a skepticism in the mind of the Negro which needed only the achievements of his own race to resolve it into a settled conviction that in the long run the races of mankind are all made of just about the same stuff. The white man's claims to virtue and honour and a sense of justice have been belied so often and so consistently in their application to Negroes and other races that there is little room for surprise if, under stress of particularly flagrant violations, Negroes should sometimes regard the white man's professions as considerably tainted with hypocrisy and his conscience as a bruised and battered affair that functions only under the pressure of necessity.

The Negro has gone far enough on the road of achievement to recognize and appreciate the superior attainments of the white race in science, art, government, business, and the like. For these the white race is honoured by all

Negroes who think. More than that, thinking Negroes do not want to lose contact with the white race in these elements of civilization. The extension of segregation in the schools of higher learning and other institutions for progressive advancement is looked upon with undisguised apprehension lest the race be denied these most essential opportunities for development.

This failure and apparent disinclination of the privileged group to employ their own professed moral and ethical standards when dealing with Negroes has been sufficient to cast a cloud over the title to superiority claimed by those who see in white nothing but good and in black nothing but evil. When a Negro sees the taxes which he pays spent in the improvement of white residential sections while the section in which he lives is persistently neglected he wonders how the white man's pride will permit him to array himself in this appropriated splendour. When he pays first-class fare for second- and third-class accommodations on the railroad he wonders what the directors of that railroad do with their consciences when they go to board meetings. When he sees those whom he has believed to be just and fair and honest and courageous stand by in silence while the poor of his race are robbed, the defenceless imposed upon, and even the guiltless condemned, he realizes at length—after his indignation has cooled—that after all it may be a harder thing to be a white man and consistently live up to one's

standards in the face of hostile public sentiment than to be a black man and submit with patience to the injustice and abuse in the hope of ultimate relief and vindication.

Nevertheless, and in spite of all that he knows of the other race, the Negro accepts the white man's standards largely as his own—perhaps too much so. To some extent certainly it must be so as long as the two races live together in America. There is a point up to which there can be but one standard. On the other hand, there are those in his own race and outside the race, too, who insist that there are things in which he can well cultivate his own standards without disadvantage to himself or to others. This the race is beginning to do. It is beginning to know and appreciate itself; and art, at least, will be richer for it, and the Negro himself the happier, and probably the white race, too.

In a much more matter of fact way the Negro uses his intimate knowledge of the white man to further his own advancement. Much of what is regarded as racially characteristic of the Negro is nothing more than his artful and adroit accommodation of his manners and methods to what he knows to be the weaknesses and foibles of his white neighbour. Knowing what is expected of him, and knowing too what he himself wants, the Negro craftily uses his knowledge to anticipate opposition and to eliminate friction in securing his desires. This also is a part of what the psychologists call his "defense mechanism."

Certain it is that such knowledge has served the race in good stead in its contact with the white man. If it be true, as is claimed, that the black man is the only type that has survived its contact with the white race, the success of this achievement must be attributed in no small part to the fact that he "knows the white man."

Chapter III

THE ADVANCING NEGRO

ONE important factor in the problem of the Negro in America has been his constantly changing status. From the time of his arrival as a slave until the present hour this process of change has been going on. The causes have in part been natural, such as the increase in numbers both by birth and by importation; but more significant still have been those changes brought about by contact with the white man's civilization to which the Negro was instantly responsive. These changes are reflected in the laws enacted from time to time with a view to regulating his movements, defining his rights, and fixing his status, which somehow would never stay fixed. He had a very troublesome way of outgrowing his status as soon as some interested party succeeded in fixing it. And sooner or later the unpleasant task would have to be done all over again. For it never was pleasant—this thing of disposing of the slave in the land of the free and the home of the brave, where all men are created equal and endowed with equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. For

always there was somebody to contend that a republic could not succeed by harbouring slavery in its bosom or by making arbitrary distinctions between its citizens.

Much of the change that came to pass in the Negro's actual condition was brought about by white men and women who interested themselves in the welfare of the black man, in some cases from a conviction of duty, and in others from more practical motives, seeing that improvement of the individual enhanced his value in many ways. That there was steady improvement in the condition of the race as a whole is evidenced by definite statistics of population, literacy, church membership, manumission and property holdings, as well as by progressive changes in the laws affecting black men which granted them an increasingly enlarged status.

But the great change followed emancipation. This act released the Negro's energies for self-improvement, and ambitions repressed by slavery found immediate expression in efforts toward education, the acquisition of property and the cultivation of religion. The controversy which preceded his emancipation had stimulated the Negro's will to survive. Thrown wholly on his own resources, he was not long in recognizing that whatever of good was to be realized from his new status as a free man must come ultimately from his own will to profit by its opportunities and advantages, and from his own efforts to improve his condition.

Since then the record of Negro progress has surprised the most sanguine friends of the race. It has been rapid and at the same time substantial. It has followed material lines without neglecting mental and spiritual lines. Indeed, for a time it seemed that the mental and spiritual progress of the race had far outstripped its progress in material things, with the result that the aspirations of Negroes seemed to be cultivated quite beyond their own capacity for their realization, and so producing a discontent and irritability that threatened to make the whole effort toward full American citizenship abortive. However true that may have been a generation ago, the balance between these two lines of progress has been largely restored: we find to-day a racial group in our national body that has fully caught the spirit of American life and modern civilization and is possessed of a capacity for self-realization that asks only an equal opportunity and a square deal to prove its fitness for sharing on an equal basis all the privileges that are the guarantees of American citizenship.

Anyone who would understand the Negro of to-day must take account of this continuous progress of the race, most rapid since emancipation and accelerating with each decade. Of the nature and extent of this progress the overwhelming majority of white people in America are, practically speaking, entirely ignorant. This is true of those whose attitude toward the Negro is sympathetic

and friendly as well as of those who are avowedly hostile; though there are few to-day who would make an out-and-out declaration of hostility. Only a few people outside of the race know actually what is going on within the race, and indeed only a relatively small number within the race know the solid facts of progress. They are familiar with generalizations and sense the spirit of things, but quite naturally they are not in a position to have definite knowledge of what the race is doing over such a wide area as is represented by these United States, not one of which is without its quota of Negro population.

To a large extent the white people who do any thinking about the Negro to-day carry in their minds a picture of the black man such as is carried in the advertisements of commodities like Cream of Wheat, Swift's Hams, Gold Dust Washing Powder, and the illustrations accompanying the stories of Octavius Roy Cohen. All these, it may be said, present a distinct type, an advance over the early deliberate caricatures of the race which symbolized the white man's conception of the Negro. But even these are just about a generation behind. The vanguard of the race where the thinking goes on is represented by a type which, except for colour and physiognomy, is not to be distinguished from the type which in all fairness would be said to represent the characteristic American as he commonly conceives himself to be.

This forward group is having to-day the typical

American experience, except where studied discrimination is an obstacle in the way; but there are those of the race to whom even the matter of colour presents no obstacle, thanks to the white man himself. In consequence, an increasing percentage of the race is developing a typical American consciousness which, for most white people, is an unrecognized factor in the so-called "Negro Problem"—a term which is fast falling into disuse, in fact, is being outgrown.

To understand the thinking Negro it is essential to know something of the changes that have been taking place in Negro life in the last score of years and of the factors in experience that have produced these changes. Reference has already been made to the change in the physical appearance of the Negro. The old school geographies used to describe the Negro as having "thick lips, flat nose, low forehead, woolly hair, black skin, long head and protruding heel." Along with these phrases went the picture of the rudest savage (we don't use that term much any more, either) that could be found, the illustration being secured to fit the written description. This is the picture of the Negro first given to white school children of a generation and more ago, the picture that occupies the foreground in the thinking of a great many white adults to-day. In time this came to be replaced by a stage type characteristic of "nigger minstrels." This was a deliberate caricature, a combination of the grotesque and

the comical, designed to stir the risibilities of a child-minded element of the public with a main eye to the increase in box-office receipts. It still has its vogue both on the stage and in certain magazines; and it still pays well, in which development Negroes themselves have had a not inconsiderable share.

But there has all the while been developing a new type of Negro that does not lend itself either to burlesque or caricature. The pigtails of Topsy are gone. The children of these Negroes are cared for from infancy with the utmost regard for their health and physical development. Their hair, of whatever quality or texture, is combed and brushed and arranged with the utmost care for the most pleasing effect and as often as not in the latest style. Easier conditions of life have tended increasingly to eliminate the harsh contours of body which are so largely the result of adverse conditions during the period of growth —just as it is with plants.

By any standard of beauty Negro children of this type are just as attractive and pleasing to the eye as any other children in America. It will not do to claim they are more so, in spite of such things as variations in colour and differences in type. The beauty of Negro womanhood is not often exposed to the public gaze. School girls may be seen at certain hours of the day; but except as sheer necessity requires an occasional excursion for shopping or business, Negro women of refinement and culture are

not often seen in public places, except among their own people. They prefer the protection and shelter of their own homes, for it happens more frequently than even our white friends are aware that such women are constantly exposed to unwelcome and uninvited attentions of a certain type of white men without any sort of redress or protection in the law.

Two cities in America have in recent years witnessed a display of refinement and beauty and culture among Negroes such as to evoke extended newspaper comment. One instance occurred in Philadelphia in connection with a football game—an annual Thanksgiving Day affair—between two leading Negro colleges, which brought to that city some fifteen thousand of the most representative coloured people from as far East as Boston, as far West as Chicago, and as far South as Atlanta.

The other occasion was a recital in Atlanta by Roland Hayes, the Negro tenor, when the City Auditorium, divided equally between the two races, was the scene of as brilliant and attractive a gathering of Negroes, it would seem, as that made by their white fellow citizens across the aisle. And just before that the City of Richmond received some fifty thousand Negroes as delegates of a fraternal organization whose general appearance and conduct, according to daily newspaper reports, did not distinguish them in the least from similar gatherings of whites in the same city, except that it was the largest host

of visitors assembled in that city for any purpose, and the most orderly.

There was a time when Negroes were conspicuous in public places because of bizarre effects in their dress and an unrestrained boisterousness, but that distinction, happily, has almost gone. One early apology for the "Jim Crow" car was the unsightly appearance, bad manners, and rough conduct of Negroes. Over against this to-day we have the general testimony of railroad conductors that when the time for the closing of boarding schools arrives and students return home in large groups and sometimes in special cars, the conduct of coloured boys and girls is frequently better than that of white students of both sexes, while the old disorder among adult Negro passengers has almost entirely disappeared. Negroes have changed, that's all.

A similar change is taking place in home life. Perhaps nowhere did slavery work a greater hardship on the Negro than in home life. For the slave there was virtually no home. Certainly as an institution slavery did not recognize the home as pertaining to Negroes. Family ties were not recognized when it came to business. There is on record an instance in which a slave, having been sold from wife and children twice previously, killed himself rather than be separated from them the third time. Since emancipation the race has had a hard struggle in building up the home. At that time "quarters" was an adequate term

for the place where Negroes lived. But this, too, has changed. It has been estimated that a larger percentage of Negroes own their own homes than of any other element in American population. Such possession is an object of pride, and with it goes the desire to improve not only physical conditions, but also its atmosphere and influence.

Along with modern conveniences and tasteful furnishings the thinking Negro provides for his family the satisfactions of home life that intelligence and culture demand everywhere. Books, paintings, sculpture, music, newspapers, magazines, all are common adjuncts of home life. There is the annual vacation for all the family, sometimes by train, sometimes by motor car. Among them are club life for women as well as for men. Card parties, receptions, at-homes, dances are all a part of the social programme for visiting guests; and where conditions make it possible without humiliation, there are theatre parties also, followed by suppers and dances, all of which reflects the genuine Americanism of the Negro. Along with these go literary, scientific, professional, and art societies and clubs, whose members have qualified by degrees from recognized American institutions and have achieved distinction in their respective fields. These are the finer flower of Negro home life.

The field of business has contributed also to the enrichment of Negro life. The little eating house and the small

store have long been in existence for the race; but in twenty-five years the Negro has launched into business on a scale that has won the respect of all classes in this field. Insurance, banking, real estate, brokerage, as well as merchandising and manufacturing, are all represented. Nearly every city with any considerable Negro population has its Negro business block or blocks. This is more true of the South, where Negro business is older, than of the North. The rate of growth is perhaps more rapid in the West than elsewhere. It is nothing strange or pretentious for a Negro business firm to refer prospective creditors to Dun and Bradstreet for their rating. Here is a new and wider field of contact between the races, a field, while not wholly devoid of sentiment, in which merit and worth are the dominant factors, where colour and race have little to do with transactions and practically nothing to do with the current daily interchange. It is in business, perhaps, that the Negro gets more honest consideration and a fairer deal than in any other of his contacts with the white man, not even excepting religion.

The Negro has long been active in the professions, law, medicine, teaching, and the ministry. The rise of this class has done much to reduce contacts between the races, but at the same time increase and advance the element of leadership within the race. Such men teach their people to think, inspire their children with higher ambitions, and in many instances create new opportuni-

ties to engage the energies and capacities of the youth of the race who have had the education and training of the schools. They lend a sense of security to the race which does not always obtain between a Negro client and his professional adviser. As prejudice against Negroes tends in some directions to grow sharper and sharper, they prefer more and more to give the confidences of professional relations to men of their own race. At first these men were looked upon with some skepticism, for Negroes in the professions were to their own people, as well as to others, a wholly new and untried thing; but the very fact that their professional qualifications were determined by the same standards as applied to whites and that in actual experience these men rendered as good service has served not only to give Negroes confidence in this particular group within the race but to increase their confidence in their own people generally. It is a reflex of the Negro's high estimate of the better class of white people that for a long time many of the race found it hard to believe that a Negro could be just as proficient as a white man in the same line, diplomas and licenses notwithstanding. And it is not unfair to the race to say that among many something of this feeling still survives, particularly among an older generation.

Behind these changes and developments in Negro life are two prominent factors, education and wealth. Negroes have been avid for education ever since emancipa-

tion as well as before. Restrained from it till then by compulsion, the first manifestation of freedom was the clamour of all ages for education. It was everywhere regarded as the white man's talisman in the acquisition of power and wealth and position. In this he shares the common belief of democracy: this was his first qualification for citizenship, his faith in education. From that day till this Negroes have been found in every educational institution in America to which they will be admitted. There is scarcely a scholastic degree attainable by examination to which they have not been admitted. A symbol of progress and achievement is presented in the fact that since emancipation forty-three Negroes in America have been admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from leading institutions for whites in this country and abroad and that eighty-eight young Negro men and women have been elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Thousands more have studied in these and other schools for whites, with the result that they have cultivated the same ideals and standards as have been held up for the best families of white people in this country, and these ideals in turn have been transmitted to the body of their own race wherever they have served.

There are still living in various parts of the country Negroes who are graduates of some of the leading Southern universities of the days immediately preceding Reconstruction. In turn white men and women, graduates

of these same schools in both sections of the country, offered themselves in large numbers to meet the demand for education suddenly manifest in this hitherto unprivileged race. They brought with them the spirit, the outlook on life, the standards and ideals in which they had been trained, and, interesting to relate, they passed them on to their eager black scholars without adulteration. The school system for Negroes inaugurated shortly after emancipation and continued through till the rise of industrial education was an exact duplication of the classical system obtaining throughout the land for whites. If the Negro was at all mistaken in this conception of education it was not his fault: it was what everybody else was being taught at that time. This ideal was eagerly absorbed, the Negro using the same textbooks that were put in the hands of white scholars.

As a consequence of all this the thinking Negro wants for himself and his children the same things the white man wants for himself and his children; and the process is further cultivated through the current newspapers and magazines, for which Negroes subscribe in increasing numbers. Certain of these periodicals are as familiar to the thinking Negro as they are to the same class of whites; and the same books are read in spite of the fact that there are only a few branch libraries for Negroes in certain sections of the country, and that in many instances others will not so much as lend a book to a Negro to read. All

of which means that the Negro is absorbing American ideas and ideals daily. Moreover, he is proud of his achievements in this direction. It is interesting that where America takes pains to Americanize her foreign elements she finds herself embarrassed by the Negro's insistence on being nothing else but American—the genuine, simon-pure, 100 per cent. American in the things that America really stands for.

Along with his advance in education, and in large part a direct result of it, the Negro has increased his wealth. Elsewhere the statistics can be found, but the signs of it are reflected in the change of dress and manners, in the character of purchases made in the stores, in the increased comfort and refinement of his physical surroundings. To-day there are actual millionaires among Negroes, rated so by Dun and Bradstreet; and they are not a curiosity any longer to Negroes themselves. If motor cars are an index of prosperity there is significance in the fact that in every city of any considerable size Negroes are to be found in possession of some of the finest cars made in America—and they are the original purchasers, too.

This increase in wealth is reflected again in the growing ability of certain classes to pay for the education of their children; and in several instances it has even been found necessary in certain Negro schools to forbid the possession and operation of motor cars by students resident in

the dormitories. Equally significant is the fact that some schools have found it desirable to lift the former ban on the wearing of silk hose and silk dresses by young women students—the standards of living having so far advanced among certain classes of patrons as to make such a rule no longer applicable.

Still another evidence of advancement is the extension of foreign travel. Only a few years ago the man or woman in the coloured race who had travelled abroad was the rare exception. That fact alone set him quite apart from his associates, but such a distinction no longer obtains. Formerly Negroes most commonly went abroad either in the service of some white firm or family, as a delegate to some international conference or convention, at the expense of the association represented, or as a soldier or sailor in the service of the United States Government; a few went for the benefits of travel alone and at their own expense, without embarrassment or strain upon their financial resources, but these were very few indeed.

To-day, however, and particularly since the World War, the numbers who go for travel and study alone probably exceed all the other classes combined except those in private or public service. They comprise for the most part the families of professional and business men whose income is greatly in excess of their current needs, and who, according to the standards current among whites, might easily be classed among the "quite-well-to-

do." As a class these members of the race are generous, too, and contribute largely and regularly toward the churches, schools, Y. M. C. A.'s, and similar institutions and organizations for the advancement of their people. It must indeed be a new Negro who gives $25,000 to an educational institution for his own people. In a word, the possession of wealth has developed in the Negro interests common to all others in America having the same advantage.

This brief survey of the advancement which has taken place in the life of the vanguard of the Negro race serves to set forth the important factors that have stimulated and influenced the thinking of this group on the subject of their relation to American life in general and their status as American citizens in particular. The chapters that follow set forth the lines which this thinking pursues much as it is expressed when a group of them get together and this question comes up, as it invariably does.

As a generalization it may be said that this progress has done as much as anything else to produce the greatly heightened race consciousness within the Negro race as a whole which is noticeable on every hand. The segregation and discrimination to which the Negro is subjected in America has in itself produced a definite race consciousness among all its members except, perhaps, among the very young and inexperienced, but these, too, arrive long before they have reached their teens. In some sections of

the country its development may be deferred for some individuals until they reach their middle teens, but sooner or later all come into this experience induced by their race and colour. The sense of it is heightened and intensified as education and wealth develop higher standards of living and an increased sensitiveness to the incongruities, the inconsistencies, and the injustices of the situation into which a dominant public sentiment forces them. For a time thinking Negroes resisted and resented the practice of identifying them as other than men like others, not to be distinguished by colour or race. But as time moved on and the practice continued there came an acquiescence in the distinction with even a certain pride manifesting itself in the adoption of the word "Negro" with a capital "N" as the term of particular designation. But it would be wrong to understand that this acquiescence in the distinction implies an acceptance of the discrimination that often accompanies it.

This advance in intelligence, culture, and worldly estate that this particular element of the race has made has convinced them by observation and comparison that there is no essential difference between white people and black people to warrant such discrimination as is practised against all Negroes. Contest and contact in various spheres have convinced them that individual differences are more real than racial differences, and that there is no ideal or standard to which the white man has attained

of which the Negro is not also capable. The thinking Negro has come thus to believe not only in his race but in himself as an individual, and insists therefore on being treated on the basis of his individual merit without regard to the accident of race. Having accepted the white man's standards he is keenly alive to his failure consistently to apply those standards, and that fact sets the Negro thinking, thinking. What is he thinking?

Chapter IV

SOLVING THE NEGRO PROBLEM WITHOUT THE NEGRO

THE presence of the Negro in America has been a matter of controversy from the very beginning. Not all the colonists wanted to import Negro labour. Slavery likewise was repugnant to a large element, but there was no law against either. The same condition existed in England. The introduction of slavery into the colonies was protested strongly by Parliament, but without avail. The anti-slavery movement had begun before the Declaration of Independence was promulgated; the matter was a subject of strong controversy before the constitutional congress, and so strong was the sentiment on both sides that only by the compromise of not referring to it at all could the now famous document be adopted. Thus our glorious ship of state threatened to founder at its very launching upon the innocent head of the black man which persistently obtruded itself above the political waters.

Nor was this division of sentiment characteristic of any one section of the colonies. Thomas Jefferson stood out

boldly and persistently in objecting to slavery as inconsistent with the principles of republican government. South Carolina and Virginia petitioned the King to stop the importation of slaves because of recurring insurrections among them. From the beginning the practice of slavery was distributed throughout the colonies, the economic forces gradually localized it in the South, but even there it was not universally acceptable. Opinion on the subject was divided, and for a time abolition thrived as well in the middle and Southern states as it did in New England; until, in fact, political forces succeeded in associating the moral question of slavery with the political doctrine of states' rights, when the moral question became obscured in the advocacy of the more defensible political principle. From that time until the present day the matter of the Negro's relation to American life has depended most largely upon his geographical location, and men's thoughts on the subject have had their initial direction determined by the place where they were born. And further, the assertion may be ventured that there is to-day more clear, honest, deliberate, and serious thinking on the whole question among white people in the South than there is in any other section of our country.

From the beginning, however, the attempt has been made to fix permanently the status of the Negro and so remove the subject from public discussion and agitation. But it refuses to stay fixed, and this largely because the

chief factor in the problem—the Negro himself—has had no place at the council table when the adjustments were made; and for the further reason that the continuous progress of the Negro called for a corresponding readjustment, and will continue to do so until he is left to take his chances in life on an equal footing with all other men without regard to his race or colour. While a slave, it is obvious that the Negro would have no voice in determining his own status. That was the privilege and duty of his master. Some free Negroes did share in the public discussion of the ethics of slavery, but their power did not extend beyond the platform.

At length this question was settled by the issues of the Civil War; then it was that the Negro was given a hand in determining his status. This task he shared with white men of the North and some Southerners both in the national congress and in the legislatures of the South. Together they established two principles—the rights of citizenship by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution, and the right of franchise by the Fifteenth Amendment. The effort to establish at the same time full civil rights without discrimination failed, and the period of "reconstruction" moved inevitably toward its close. It was certain of eclipse for the reason that in trying to effect this necessary adjustment a third element was again left out of the equation. This time it was the Southern white man. He was not at the council tables

of Reconstruction; at least, his voice and vote were ineffectual in the ultimate result.

This is not to be taken too literally. At no time in the history of the period was the Southern white man excluded from the legislative halls of the several states. There never were any all-Negro legislatures in any states of the Union. What did happen was that, following the war and the enfranchisement of the Negro, Negroes were elected to these bodies in such numbers as, with those whites from both North and South who desired power either for economic or political purposes, to control legislation for their own ends. Always there was a white minority whose voice could be heard and whose vote could be counted in the decision of any measure; the majority was never composed wholly of Negroes; it was a coalition of whites and blacks, with the whites as the directing element, and these were not at all times solely from the North.

After the Civil War the whites in the South were divided into five classes: those from the North, who had been in the Federal Army and remained to settle permanently in the South; those who migrated thither after the war to build up their fortunes out of the opportunities of the new order of things—the "carpet baggers," so called after the symbol of their migration; the native whites who had always been opposed to slavery and so sympathized with the Union and the government; the

native whites who had formerly supported the Confederacy but had now accepted the arbitrament of the sword and had taken the oath of allegiance to the government; and finally the irreconcilables—relatively few in number —who refused to be reconciled to the defeat of the Confederacy and remained forever "unreconstructed." The first three groups found it easy and natural to take advantage of the new order in the legislature and unite with the Negro element to form a majority in the control of legislation. At no time, however, was there such a thing as a "Negro party," or any party organized in support of the aspirations of Negroes, nor any real Negro leadership influencing matters outside of the race itself. The principle of union was loyalty to the government, symbolized, in the practice of politics, by the "Republican party," whose policies and purposes had been vindicated in the outcome of the war. The freedmen, when enfranchised, quite naturally became Republicans, as were also the first three of these groups of whites. They voted together, not on racial principles, but upon political principles; and there is yet to be produced an instance in which any attempt was made to legislate along racial lines, either in favour of the Negro or against the whites, except to remove from Negroes the disabilities which had formerly been enacted against them.

Following these lines, the legislature of Mississippi, where Negroes took a large and active part in political

life, contained 64 Negroes out of a total of 153 for the years 1873–1874, the period of largest Negro representation. In Alabama the largest representation of Negroes was 35 out of a total of 133 in 1874–1875. Then, in South Carolina there were 86 Negroes out of a total of 157 in 1870–1871. This left even in these states a very considerable body of Southern whites to represent the interests of their race. To say that the Southern white man was not at the council table of reconstruction is therefore an overstatement of the case; and it is furthermore incorrect to say that in the process of reconstruction there were no compromises to protect or mollify the sensibilities of those whites who could not instantly make the change from a social order in which white men were not only in control but were supported and protected by law in the conception that black men existed for their direct and immediate benefit, to a new order wherein black men could not only regulate their own fortunes where that might be necessary, but had some share in the decision of those matters which affected the interests of white men as well.

In this situation there were naturally inequalities, incongruities, and some inconsistencies and anomalies, which, added to the abuses and irregularities, finally led to political upheaval by the shotgun process—evidence itself that white men were not entirely out of the picture—and ultimately to the disfranchisement and segregation of the Negro which still obtain. Under this new

order the Negro was not only left without power, but also without representation; and not only without representation, but also, until recently, practically without consideration. When in these states white men returned to control with the Negro eliminated, such consideration as the Negro received was directed toward a reëstablishment of disabilities such as the federal law would allow and that would effectively remove him from contact with the white man's world, except where he might be used to general or personal advantage. Such other consideration as he might receive was not so much a recognition of his right in law as an expression of the benevolence of the white man in the exercise of a quasi-guardianship over a backward minor who must be tolerated because of the difficulties and disadvantages of disposing of him otherwise.

Practically the great body of Negroes stand in America with only a precarious protection of the law, without participation in their own government, and surrounded by a public sentiment which in any issue that might arise is as yet hostile rather than sympathetic. The Negro is not without friends among the whites, but these must assist him most effectually outside the law. Where the law is invoked it is by slow and painful process that a hearing is obtained; and only in the last resort are the issues passed upon in their ultimate significance. Except for a few state legislatures, the Supreme Court of the

United States is still all that stands in a legal way between the Negro and civil and political extinction.

Public sentiment still effectively eliminates the Negro from equitable consideration in all those matters of common welfare for which government exists. Where Negroes are found in largest numbers the declarations of leaders on public matters are generally understood to have no reference to black men. To talk about the "rights of citizenship" does not mean the Negro—that was settled by disfranchisement. "Good citizenship" applies to white people; a black man is encouraged to be "a good Negro." "Government of the people, for the people, and by the people" does not as yet include black people. "Education for all children" does not mean for black children unless——! So in all public matters it is accepted that the Negro is concerned and included only incidentally: the law is so construed; the government is so administered; and public sentiment is so cultivated, except where the black man with the assistance and encouragement of white friends of the South as well as of the North persistently challenges to a broader interpretation of the law, strives to prevent the further extension of disabilities, works for the removal of restrictions, solicits the equitable administration of public interests, and attempts to develop a public sentiment that will accord him an equal and ungrudging share in the opportunities and privileges of American life.

In effect the Negro is segregated in public thought as well as in public carriers. The active hostility of an original few has induced a very general and almost complete ignorance of what the Negro does face in this good land of "equal opportunity." The hostility, except for an occasional sporadic upheaval, is on the decline; but the ignorance remains, as does also its effect. All over our country, in every section and every state, the Negro faces handicaps, suffers discriminations, is meted injustices which make of the race the most underprivileged group in American life. The extent to which this is true is known only to those who labour under its disadvantages. In spite of them the race has forged ahead. But with this advance the sense of inequality and injustice has deepened. Along with it, however, goes to-day the conviction that not all of his disadvantages are the result of malicious intent so much as of ignorance and indifference. He, furthermore, believes that the inborn sense of fairness which in general characterizes American life, will, when the facts are revealed, assert itself in removing the inequalities and opening the way for the unhampered development of its Negro citizenship in their constructive and original contribution to American life. The persistent voicing of his grievances and his obvious separation from the rest of his fellow citizens, along with the continual appeal for assistance in the enterprises that make for the development of his race, have stimulated an increasing desire to know

the facts concerning the Negro's life and activities as a part of our national existence. A younger generation in all sections, along with fair-minded men and women of an older generation, are interested to learn what lies at the bottom of the Negro's unrest and dissatisfaction, and what, if any, occasion exists for the anomaly of the black man's segregation in the midst of a professedly democratic situation.

There have not been wanting at any time those to present the case against the black man. Indeed, in the past it has not been necessary even to present a case. The principle known in congressional circles as "senatorial courtesy" has operated most effectively in public life against the Negro in the past. All that has been necessary is that some one white man should rise to protest against the presence or participation of the Negro, and it immediately operated to exclude him from whatever comforts, conveniences, privileges, or rights were enjoyed at the same time or in the same place by the one objector. Even the government yields to such demands, and discriminatory measures are often railroaded through at the will of an aggressive minority without a protest, and public sentiment will remain silent and dumb in the presence of admitted injustice.

But that day and order of affairs are beginning to pass. There are those to-day among white people who stop to ask, "Why?"; "Is it fair?"; "Is it necessary?"; "Is it

Christian?" They are, perhaps, more active and outspoken in the South to-day than anywhere else in our country. Conscientious high-minded men and women, young as well as old, representative of the best thought and aspirations of the South, have courageously and devotedly set themselves to discover all the truth in regard to the situation of the Negro, not only in his external circumstances, but as well concerning his thoughts and feelings.

Various causes are operating to give an increasing weight to the opinions and attitude of the Negro on those matters in which he is a factor. Booker T. Washington began early in his career to impress his people with the importance of economic considerations as effecting the welfare and progress of the race. There was a general response to the idea, and the accumulating wealth of the Negro and his corresponding purchasing power are making him an economic factor to which the business world gives increasing consideration. There are towns and cities in various parts of the country where a trade boycott by Negroes has effectively corrected offensive practices indulged in by clerks, salesmen, and other employees in dealing with coloured patrons. Some proprietors have quietly but carefully and deliberately cultivated the good will of Negro patrons by instructing their employees to give the same courteous consideration to coloured people as to whites. Such establishments become quickly known

among coloured buyers and are freely patronized. Managers and proprietors report that as a class their coloured patrons are liberal spenders, good debtors, and discriminating purchasers who are at the same time pleasant customers. The old practice of carrying a certain line of inferior goods for the coloured trade rarely obtains any longer unless it be in plantation stores and small towns where the patronage is largely of the rural classes.

Still greater consideration is being given the Negro as an economic factor in production both on the farm and in the factory. The World War caused a great upheaval in the industrial field in America. The supply of cheap labour in Northern industrial centres was immediately reduced by the call to the colours from the home countries, and this was followed immediately after the war by drastic restrictions on immigration. The only remaining supply available for replacing this labour was in the Negroes of the plantations, mines, and factories of the South, already oversupplied. There began at once a great exodus of labour to the North, followed quickly by the professional and business elements whose clientele they constituted. The rapidity of this movement which gave no time to planters and manufacturers to readjust their organization threatened for a time completely to demoralize Southern agriculture and industry. The seriousness of it was reflected in frantic measures taken to stop or at least check the movement. In some places ticket agents re-

fused to sell to Negroes railroad tickets to any Northern point; in other places Negroes intent upon going North were ordered away from the stations. Later on a heavy tax was imposed upon labour agents, and in some places they were threatened and forced to leave town.

But this did not check the movement, the effects of which were in many instances disastrous. Crops were left unharvested in the fields; live stock was left standing in the barnyard; houses were abandoned, sometimes with furniture in them; homes and farms in process of purchase were left in the hands of the original owners without any attempt to recover any equity the purchaser may have had in them. This meant to the whites no hands in the field either to cultivate or gather crops which proved in many cases a total loss, accounts unpaid in the stores, stocks of goods unsold on the shelves, and eventually notes to be met at the bank with no one and nothing with which to meet them.

In spite of editorial disclaimers, business men began to realize the importance of the Negro to the economic life of the South, but not till business in the North had promptly recognized his possibilities for the industrial life of the North. Then began a very serious effort to find out what the Negro was thinking that he should so suddenly, so eagerly, and so unanimously forsake his ancestral abode and go wandering off, where he was assured he would be snubbed and spurned, even mobbed; be cheated

by exorbitant prices; be crowded into unsanitary tenements; and finally die of cold and disease, only to be buried in the warm welcoming soil of the sad, forsaken South.

But it didn't take long to discover what the Negro was thinking, what he was looking for. He told it frankly and promptly—good wages, good schools, better housing, wholesome recreation, police protection, justice in and out of the courts, a larger share in civic improvements, and a chance to make the most of himself and the same thing for his children. They told him he wasn't sure of getting those things in the North. He replied that he was sure he wasn't getting them in the South, so he couldn't be any worse off in the North, and would take the chance of finding it better.

When no argument would hold the Negro, when persuasion even from leaders of his own race proved ineffective, then these hard-headed business men began to give consideration to what the Negro was thinking, and the two most important factors in Southern life sat down together for the first time since emancipation to consider what was good for the black man, what was good for the white man, and what was good for the South as a whole. The millennium is not here yet. It may be a long way off, but it certainly lies in that direction. Life is better for the Negro in the South to-day than it has ever been before; and it is not a rash prophecy that in ten years

many ambitious and prosperous Negroes in the North will be coming or returning South to share the increasing opportunities of their race in what is to-day the most promising section of our country.

Another element operating to gain consideration for what the Negro is thinking is the quickening conscience of increasing numbers of white people in America on the subject of race relations. It is understandable how a generation growing up in the midst of slavery as an established institution, of which they, themselves, were a part, should accept it as a normal arrangement and see no inconsistency in its existence under a Republican government, with all its implications of superiority for the white race and inferiority for the Negro. But when this institution has been abolished and a new generation arrives, sooner or later the inconsistencies of the situation will challenge the minds and consciences of those whom it intimately touches, and the effort will be made to find the legal and moral sanctions for a social code that falls outside the generally accepted basis of human relations. Such an effort is being made now.

It is being stimulated by the practice now grown common in American life of subjecting all possible matters to examination and analysis, especially social relations of every sort. For a long time the Negro problem was left outside the range of such investigation. But since the World War inquiring young America has grown impa-

tient of the ban placed upon the discussion of this subject, and wherever freedom of choice is allowed the problem of race relations, particularly as it touches relations between whites and blacks, is called up for first consideration. Immediately there is a demand to hear *from* the Negro, rather than *about* him. To an extent never before known there is a popular demand for first-hand information concerning the Negro and from the Negro himself. Schools, colleges, forums, clubs are interested in the actual conditions in America as they affect the race and what the Negro himself thinks concerning those conditions. There is frank recognition of the contention that conditions of life as they affect twelve million Americans and the reactions of one tenth of our population, both physical and mental, to these conditions, are worthy of serious consideration in the developing of American institutions and the shaping of national policies in peace times as well as in war times.

Yet another reason for knowing what the Negro thinks is assuming increasing importance as the range of public interest extends beyond our national boundaries. The white man himself has insisted on dividing the human race into two classes—the white races and the non-white races. The white races constitute not more than one fifth of the population of the world and occupy but one tenth of its land areas; but they insist upon controlling the remaining population and areas for the advantage primarily

of the white races. The process of white world domination went on rather peacefully till after the World War, when the non-white races woke to challenge the moral right of the white man to dominate the rest of the world either by moral or physical force. England and America are regarded as the foremost representatives of white control. To the darker races the proper significance of white control will be found in the policies which these countries adopt in dealing with darker races within their domain. To the outside world America's policies in dealing with twelve million Negroes within her own borders will represent American ideals toward other non-white races. What these Negroes think on the subject will be of increasing interest to other peoples. America is to-day the scene of the most extensive contacts between white and non-white races. Here two extremes meet. The Negro's interpretation of the white man may well become the standard of the world's judgment. The good will of his next-door neighbour is the best recommendation that any man can have.

Thus from a variety of considerations there is an increasing desire to discover what the black man carries in the back of his head, the popularly conceived location of the thinking process. The patience of the Negro, his persistent good humour under the most trying circumstances, his meekness in contrast to the fierce resentment of the Indian, his apparent passivity under the white

man's abuse and domineering, have led many to think the Negro to be careless, indifferent, and spiritless, incapable of any serious reflection upon the issues of life, and habitually of that state of mind described by the phrase "happy-go-lucky." In this they are deceived, not by any intention of the Negro, but by their ignorance of the Negro's psychology and the Negro's wholly intentional secretiveness. In so far as the Negro has revealed himself to the average white man there is sufficient justification for thinking him indifferent and passive, even spiritless; but closer acquaintance soon discloses that the Negro is thoroughly alert to all that goes on around him.

Properly to interpret the Negro one should understand at the outset that the psychology of the Negro is protective. The Negro everywhere has a steadfast purpose of survival: the race must be very old, for that is its ingrained habit. It has long been subject to adversity: this has made the race cautious. It has had a long history of slavery, long before American slavery: this has made it secretive in the presence of manifestly preponderant power and general animosity. The race still survives, for it has learned the discretion that is the better part of valour. In this last trait the Negro stands in distinct contrast to the North American Indian. The Indian also is cautious and secretive, proverbially so; but he will stand and fight a regiment of artillery with no other weapon

than a bow and arrow. To him survival does not enter into consideration at all; his is probably the most spirited race among mankind. It paid the price of its valour with the risk of entire extinction. In the same situation the Negro would waive the challenge to hostilities, come voluntarily into the enemies' camp, and by ingratiating usefulness and discretion soon win his way to command of the very weapons designed for use against him.

In this the careful observer will discover another characteristic of Negro psychology—his quick perception of physical disadvantage and his equally quick adjustment to secure the moral advantage. In all the agitation concerning the Negro's status in America, the moral advantage has always been on his side, and with that as a lever he has steadily effected progress in spite of material disadvantages. In this he has surprised both friends and foes. Somehow there has been an element of the white race in America that has constantly expected the Negro to resort to violence for the satisfaction of his grievances. This apprehension existed in a large degree immediately after his emancipation and was a strong factor in the developments of "reconstruction." It presented itself again after the World War.

There were those who feared that the experiences of the black man on the soil of France would make him bitter and vengeful on his return to America. With this

thought in mind many communities, especially in the South, prepared themselves for physical encounters with returning Negro soldiers. Sheriffs in some instances went so far as to supply themselves with machine guns and took other measures to protect the community against possible violence. But in this there was a surprising and general, though agreeable, disappointment. These boys did return with a deeper sense of the injustices of their position in America. Those who remained at home, both men and women, were more sensible than ever of their wrongs. But their indignation took the form of stern resolve to wield the moral weapons of their incongruous position to their utmost effect in securing what in the fervour of war was their admitted right as American citizens. This was the attitude of the Negro then and is his attitude now, and has been his attitude throughout his long contact with the white man in America.

All this registers a keen sense of the inconsistencies of the practice of democracy as applied to the Negro. He sees quite clearly just where the white man's professions of Christianity and his practice of the code in his relations with his darker brother in Christ do not harmonize. Beneath his guileless, pleasant exterior there is a deep-seated concern. He has no intention of deceiving with his smile. It is his saving grace; it is pirmarily for his own benefit; it salves the wounds of adversity.

In this mood the Negro has taken on a fresh interest

in his fellow Americans. He is thinking, and it is always interesting when people begin to think. It is in answer to this interest that the attempt is here made to make some revelation of the experiences of the Negro which produce the irritations of racial contacts, the thoughts they stimulate, and in addition some of the feelings that rise in his breast as he reflects upon the ways of the white man. Some things here recorded may surprise a great many white people, but that is only because the Negro has always been quite chary of disclosing all his thoughts to the white man. He seldom tells all the truth about such matters: a great deal of it may not find its way into this volume; but what is here set forth may be confirmed almost any time, anywhere; not, indeed, by asking the individual Negro a direct question on the subject, but by changing places with him—which nobody in America wants to do, not even his most devoted and sympathetic friends—and living for a brief period among the uncertainties, perplexities, and inconsistencies which are the daily experience in greater or less degree of every Negro in these United States.

The hope is that this candid revelation will tend to convince all classes that the Negro has just cause for dissatisfaction with his present condition in American life; that the things complained of are not necessary to safeguard the welfare and prosperity of any group of American citizens; that most of these abuses could be corrected

through the application of courage, conscientiousness, and consistency; and that the Negro himself is equipped and qualified as well as ready to do his share, and more if necessary, to make the adjustments that would bring harmony, good will, contentment, prosperity, and safety to all.

Chapter V

THE NEGRO AND THE LAW: COMMON CARRIERS

No phase of discrimination against the Negro touches the race more widely or intimately than segregation. In its application no measure operates so effectively to retard the general progress of the race, not even disfranchisement. Its defenders urged it originally to reduce friction between the two races, which it probably has done on the face of it; but it acts daily and hourly to excite the resentment of all Negroes against the continuous injustices perpetrated under the cover and protection of segregation policies.

The policy of segregation, wherever it is in force, touches all Negroes, irrespective of their means, education, character, or position, and in actual practice subjects them all to embarrassment, humiliation, and injustice. In theory segregation is advocated as a measure applicable with equal force to both races, but in practice this obtains so rarely that it is not exaggeration to say that for all practical purposes it never does. As carried

into effect the Negro is at a constant disadvantage even in the face of the most specific directions to the contrary.

There are many Negroes, perhaps the majority of them, who would be willing to accept segregation as a temporary arrangement in the process of reducing the inequalities between the races that are the unavoidable result of their differing condition through a period of two hundred and fifty years and more. It is no reflection on anyone to admit that the status of the Negro at the end of slavery was in marked contrast to that of the white man after a thousand years more or less of freedom, or confining it to his history in America, after two hundred and fifty years of untrammelled opportunity. To regard the condition of the two races as equal at the point of the Negro's emancipation would be a contention that only the most obstinate theorist would maintain, and he only by closing his eyes to a multitude of very obvious facts right around him. It was in the matter of rights and potentialities that the friends of the Negro maintained with him his claim to equality of treatment.

But ideas and passions acquired under the rule of slavery, intensified by the war, and aggravated by events following the war, along with certain of these very obvious disparities in the condition of the two races, as already indicated—these unescapable facts made it necessary to affect adjustments in the contacts of the two races which ultimately, however, took legal form in

statutes and ordinances known familiarly as "segregation laws." These laws call for the physical separation of the two races in public places, presumably with equal accommodations for both. What actually happens constitutes a greater cause of dissatisfaction to Negroes everywhere than any other manifestation of racial discrimination.

The principle of segregation was first legally sanctioned in the operation of common carriers, and includes, where practised, railroads, street cars, busses, taxicab and elevators—though the latter are not technically in that class. Anyone who has ridden on railroad trains, before and after segregation of the races was first introduced, could understand what brought it about. It hardly required any race prejudice to find a certain type of Negroes, seen in large numbers on the trains, especially on Saturday and Sunday, objectionable even to the point of being offensive, in manners and conduct as well as in dress and personal appearance generally. In these things such passengers were as objectionable to many of their own people as to the whites, and much more embarrassing. It was no surprise, therefore, that segregation came on the railroads, and the argument for it could hardly be gainsaid. Also there was a certain objectionable type of white man, and when the two met there was trouble. This was the day of the second-class coach where at least 90 per cent. of the coloured race rode with a small percentage of such whites. Out of this situation developed segregation on public carriers.

What does it mean? In the first place it means inferior equipment for Negroes. With a few notable exceptions, such as the Illinois Central Railroad and the Atlanta and West Point Railroad, and possibly one or two other roads where the practice prevails, the coaches provided for Negro passengers are distinctly inferior to the coaches provided for white passengers. Many of these railroads still have wooden coaches for Negro passengers used along with steel coaches for their other passengers. In most instances the accommodations for Negroes are combined with the baggage compartment or the smoker for whites, which in effect makes the Negro section a smoker too, as it is impossible to confine tobacco smoke and odour to the white section. One large railroad, when traffic is heavy, frequently puts on a regulation day coach for its Negro passengers with one end marked off by a crude, movable, short canvas curtain to provide a smoker for whites: such separation is only a fiction.

The common practice among the railroads is to carry the coach for Negroes next to the baggage car when separated, and next the engine and tender when combined with the baggage car or smoker, admittedly the most dangerous position in the train in the event of collision. This hazard is immeasurably increased when the Negro coach is wood and the rest of the train is all steel. There is, it seems, a regulation of the Interstate Commerce Commission forbidding this latter arrangement, but the Com-

mission cannot see everything, always, everywhere; and the sufferers being Negroes, it is very apt to escape the notice of officials in any part of the country.

It is furthermore true that most of the railroads use their old rolling stock for the accommodation of Negroes, just as in some households the clothing of the older children is passed on to the younger or given to the servants. This is a sure guarantee of inferior accommodations for Negroes, as well as thrifty use of old equipment. This usually means also poorer lighting for the coach for Negroes. Where the rest of the train is lighted by gas or electricity the ancient oil lamps give a feeble glare in the darkness of the section for Negroes, or where electricity is used throughout, the Negro coach will carry fewer bulbs and of a lower candle power, so that it is frequently impossible to read by them.

Another common practice is to make the Negro coach the headquarters for the newsboy and the conductor and the repository for the train equipment, such as lanterns, flags, brooms, dusters, and sundry other articles which are deposited in some corner between the seats or in the racks above the seats. The newsboy and the conductor, both of whom are white, of course, usually occupy two seats each with their outfit, and very frequently Negro passengers are left to stand in the aisle and positively forbidden to occupy the seats reserved for the conductor's use. There is many a story of abuse from conductors and

porters heaped upon tired, weary passengers who have insisted on occupying these seats for which they have paid full first-class fare. Negroes often wonder why under the segregation law the white conductor and the white newsboy insist on riding with Negroes. It would seem that they would prefer to be with their own people. It ought to be pleasanter for them; it certainly would be for the coloured passengers.

In actual practice, however, the principle of segregation seems to apply only to coloured passengers. There are trains upon which Negroes are confined strictly to the Negro coach; they cannot leave that compartment to go into any other part of the train whatever. They cannot so much as board the train by way of the coach for whites. On the other hand, however, white passengers as well as the train crew have free access to all parts of the train. White men have been known to come into the Negro coach to smoke and drink liquor without protest or interference from the conductor or any of the train crew. And one of the most interesting sights is to see the train crew come into the Negro coach and wash their hands at the drinking fountain, spread their lunch on the seats, and use the Negro compartment as a diner and even as a dressing room.

Over against this there is the great difficulty and, for the vast majority of Negroes, the impossibility of securing any other comfort and convenience in travel than that

which is set aside for them in the regulation Negro section. It is practically impossible for the average Negro to go to the ticket window and secure Pullman accommodations of any sort. He may ask for them, of course—there is no law against that—but he is either told they are all sold out, to come back again, or to apply to the conductor at the train. In at least two states it is forbidden by law to sell Pullman accommodations to Negroes and for a Negro to ride in a Pullman car except as an employee of the railroad or a servant accompanying a white passenger; this in spite of the fact that state laws are supposed to be inoperative against interstate passengers. It has not infrequently happened that Negroes have been taken from Pullman trains, under arrest by local officers, who board the train in response to information wired ahead and remove the passenger by force, carrying him to jail and later to police court, where he is fined and told to leave town in a hurry and to stay off Pullman trains. White passengers on the train have been known to eject a Negro passenger from the train; and in some instances local private white citizens have boarded the train and done the same thing when advised in advance of the presence of a Negro passenger on the train. Against all of which the Negro is absolutely without redress, and women are as defenseless as the men, even more so. Their sex does not spare them, and never has, from the disadvantages of belonging to the weaker race.

An equal hardship to Negroes is the difficulty of obtaining suitable food while travelling. At one time this amounted to an impossibility. Aboard some trains this has been remedied to the extent of permitting Negro passengers to enter the dining car either after all white passengers have been served or, on some lines, on the third call. Some railroads send a waiter with sandwiches and coffee through the day coaches, including the Negro coach. The general disadvantage of all this lies in the uncertainty of the accommodation. To wait till all white passengers have been served makes the coloured passengers subject to the whims of those who consult only their own pleasure, with the result that it is several hours past the regular meal time before one can secure anything to eat whatever. And ofttimes the third call for meals comes when the train is near the passenger's destination or the point where the dining car is detached, and in consequence the meal is hurried and unsatisfactory. It often happens also that by the time the third call has passed there is little left on the bill of fare that is desirable, if indeed there is anything at all left of the original menu.

More serious still is the matter of a berth. The time has long since come when Negroes, like other people, find it more convenient to travel at night in the discharge of business. Under such circumstances it is imperative that the traveller have a good night's rest before undertaking the duties of the following day. But no Negro can be

altogether sure of obtaining the necessary accommodations or of reaching his destination, if he does secure them, in safety and peace. Various railroads try to remedy this situation through their local officials to whom application is made for the desired reservations. But if "Joseph" is not known to the reigning "Pharaoh" in that office his chances of success are very doubtful, so much so indeed that the prospective passenger often prefers to accept the hardship of trying to snatch cat naps in a day coach rather than face the evasion and misrepresentation that are so often the answer to his request for a berth.

The embarrassments of Negro patrons of the railroads where segregation is practised are not confined to the trains. Before he boards the train, the coloured passenger meets with a succession of affronts. His first is apt to be in the waiting room of the station. If it is a large modern building the waiting room for coloured people more often than not will be tucked away into some obscure part of the building, inconvenient of access and noticeably inferior in appointment, as if the company were annoyed at having to make any provision whatever for its coloured passengers. Atlanta, Richmond, Memphis, and Birmingham provide notable examples of this kind of treatment for Negroes. The smaller the station the more nearly equal will be the accommodations for both races, except that the waiting room for Negroes will be poorly lighted, as poorly ventilated, and as frequently uncleaned,

while the worst possible conditions obtain in the toilets—they are simply indescribable. Sometimes the waiting room is heated—almost to suffocation in large stations; in the small ones, where trains are not very frequent, there is apt to be no fire at all; and in remote sections the station agent will not be offended if the coloured passenger gathers his own fuel and makes his own fire.

With some such experience rankling in his bosom the traveller approaches the ticket window. If, to avoid the rush that develops as train time approaches, he decides to purchase his ticket early, he is really not surprised if the agent tells him it is too soon to buy a ticket. He retires to his seat in some discomfiture, to return when the train is called, and he observes the agent selling tickets to white patrons. He takes his stand at the window for Negroes, and there waits and waits and waits until every white passengers is sold a ticket and is then impatiently asked, "Where are you going?" with barely time enough to get his luggage and board the train. Sometimes there is not time enough left to purchase the ticket, and the hapless passenger is rebuked by the gate man for not having a ticket; the porter at the train growls his reproaches, and the conductor voices his contempt for the stupidity that boards a train without a ticket.

Experiences such as these are elements in the thinking of every Negro on the subject of race relations. They are not exceptional; they are not occasional; they are in one

form or another an invariable part of the black man's experience in travelling where segregation of the races is a requirement of the law. Until the motor car they were inescapable, but they are in some degree avoidable by those of the race whose means permits them to use a private conveyance, but even this is not often available or feasible for long journeys.

Something of the same experience is encountered in the use of the street cars. Because the law does not require the use of separate cars for the two races Negroes share the same accommodations as are provided for whites, except on those lines where the patronage is practically all coloured. Such lines will be distinguished for their limited facilities and inferior, ofttimes dilapidated, rolling stock. Negroes like other people, have fixed hours in the day when traffic is heavier than at others: as a rule there is for them no doubling of the schedule, no change of equipment, no provision of any sort to handle the increased numbers with comfort or convenience.

But more irritating still, as well as confusing, when not simply amusing, is the variation in rules for handling coloured passengers in different parts of the country and in different cities and on different cars of the same city. In one city white and coloured passengers will enter by the same door at the front, the coloured passengers leaving by the rear door, the white by the front door. In another city the arrangement will be reversed, all entering by the

rear door and the whites departing by the front door and the coloured by the rear. In still another city the whites may use either door for entering or leaving, while coloured passengers are restricted to the use of the rear door. There have been occasions when coloured people have chartered street cars for their exclusive use and been restricted to the use of the rear door even with the car crowded. On one-man cars everybody enters and leaves by the same door, you would suppose; but a car is now in use that has an automatically operated rear door used exclusively as an exit for coloured passengers.

Confusion and consequent embarrassment is increased in the matter of seating. In one city Negroes are assigned to the forward part of the car and whites to the rear; though in the majority of cases the situation is reversed. And there is no way for a coloured man, stranger to the town, to tell how he is to enter the car or where he is to sit until he has boarded the car, with the result that he is frequently abused for his ignorance and the unintentional error. Sometimes the motorman makes a mistake and admits a coloured man by the wrong door, thinking he is white; the coloured man, being ignorant of local rules, boards the car by the entrance opened for him. When the conductor afterward discovers the mistake the passenger is again abused, and in some cases the car has actually been stopped and the coloured passenger forced to alight and enter by the door designated for coloured people.

Some cities, most of them in fact, require simply that passengers of each race take seats in opposite ends of the car and fill up toward the centre till all the seats are taken by either white or coloured people. In such cases passengers of either race will voluntarily relinquish their seats and move forward or back, as the case may be, to another seat in order to make room for an additional passenger of the other race. When it is not done voluntarily the conductor has authority to require it. In other cities the point of separation will be marked by a sign on the back of the seat saying to each race in effect, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." In some cases this sign is movable from seat to seat, as occasion may require a change; in others it is fixed and, however crowded the section for Negro passengers may be and however many vacant seats there may be in the section for whites, Negro passengers must remain standing. In such cases the original allotment is sufficient to take care of all probable white passengers. There are other cities where the partition is high enough to obscure the view between the sections, with the coloured people in the rear. One would suppose that this is designed to shut out unpleasant sights from the view of white passengers, but since they ride with their backs to the coloured people one wonders just what other vagary of prejudice is thereby provided for. Where coloured people ride in the rear it is said that it is to keep unpleasant odours from the nostrils of white people; that is also the

section of the car which gathers the most dust on unpaved streets. There must be something in the latter suggestion, for the forward part of the railroad train is also the section which catches the most smoke and cinders.

But how a coloured man, or a white man either, for that matter, can be expected to know all these intricacies of segregation as he travels in different parts of the country is beyond explanation. The truth of the matter is he is expected to find out as best he can—usually by hard knocks—and conform to local practice. In many cities some local coloured citizens refrain entirely from the use of street cars. Formerly they walked; now they use their own motor cars. When segregation on street cars was first introduced the effort was made by coloured citizens in many places to operate bus lines for coloured patrons, but city councils quickly put these out of commission by assessing exorbitant taxes upon the privileges. As a result the rank and file of the race must submit to segregation with all of its disadvantage and humiliation, paying the full rates, while they read the company's motto posted conspicuously in the front of the car: Service, Courtesy, Safety.

Travel by water subjects the Negro to essentially the same experiences as travel by land. There is considerable coastwise travel by Negroes between Eastern ports. In these coastal waters the practice of segregation prevails in the waters adjacent to the states where it is a legal re-

quirement, though here again the regulations of interstate commerce would technically apply. It is convenient, however, for the steamship lines to ignore these regulations, and as yet the application of interstate traffic regulations to what is legally interstate commerce, has not been seriously questioned.

Here again the Negro passenger receives inferior accommodations. Such staterooms as he is permitted to occupy as a rule are on the lower desk at the stern and over the propellers, whose chug-chug disturbs his sleep all through the night while the lights in the galley adjacent illume the darkness from twilight till dawn. Here, too, the ventilation is poorest; and in warm weather, with crowded quarters, the conditions are almost unbearable. And to make sure that by no chance he shall escape to better accommodations and fresher air, the door of the companionway to the deck aft is kept securely locked. Very much less than a fair proportion of the accommodations of the boat is available to Negroes, even though they may outnumber white passengers three to one, as sometimes happens, and always they are given the least desirable part of the boat. When the accommodations designated for coloured passengers are sold out no amount of money can secure anything more, though dozens of staterooms may be unoccupied. Only inferior accommodations are available to Negroes, regardless of their ability to pay for better.

By common testimony a typical instance of the worst conditions in this direction is found on the boats of the Chesapeake Steamship line that ply between Baltimore and West Point, Virginia. In spite of repeated protests over a number of years Negro passengers on this line are herded into close quarters with scarcely the slightest regard for convenience or comfort, though the patronage of coloured passengers on this line is as great and at times greater than on any other line in Eastern waters. That the situation is not wholly without hope is manifest in the fact that originally the quarters provided for coloured passengers were secured by converting the toilet rooms for white passengers into staterooms for Negroes. The traffic became so heavy, however, that eventually all the accommodations on the lower deck aft, which is also the freight deck, were reserved for Negroes, and it is these that are so distressingly overcrowded, on week-ends especially.

Bad as the conditions may be on railroad and steamship lines, they are again and again aggravated by the truculent air of some Negro porter—of whom there are many—who apparently finds great satisfaction in lording it over the members of his own race. There is a class of Negroes, as there is of other races, for that matter, who inwardly glory in their connections with those who have power and authority, and who by reason of those connections abrogate to themselves as much as they dare assume of the

authority and power of their superiors in office. Clothed in this garb they order the passengers about, often in insolent tones, inquire into their personal affairs, and make themselves especially contemptible by their advances toward women passengers who travel alone.

How familiar to the ears of coloured women who travel in the regions of segregation are such questions as these: "What may be your name?"; "Where you goin'?"; "Are you married?"—all this accompanied by much swagger and pretention, by insinuation and innuendo, such as to be completely disgusting except to those characters who find pleasure in rude but conspicuous attentions.

Now this is not true of all Negro porters: just here it ought to be explained that the "porter" on the day coach of these railroads is not to be confused or identified with the regulation Pullman porter. The latter is an employee of the Pullman Car Company engaged for service on sleeping and parlour cars. The offending and offensive character referred to above is an employee of the railroad company and does service as a brakeman, porter, and the conductor's orderly—all in one. And among these there are many who give all the consideration to members of their own race that the limited accommodations and facilities at their disposal will permit.

Nor is it true of all railroads. It is interesting to observe the types of men employed for this service by the different railroads. On some roads the porters are all of them

polite, courteous, considerate, and helpful to coloured passengers. They are men of fine character who lend distinction to the service in which they are engaged. In private life they are serious, sober minded, thrifty, upright, reliable citizens, honoured and respected by all who know them, of both races. Most of these have been in their company's employ for a long period of time, and the company in such cases takes pains to see that the conditions under which they work are satisfactory and pleasant. But it would seem that some other roads deliberately select a certain rough type of individual for this service, whose manner is overbearing toward members of his own race, but who, it is noticeably apparent, is obsequious enough toward the white members of the train crew and white people in general. It is to be observed that this type of porter is the "buffoon" of the train crew. His time is burdened with much personal service for these fellow employees, and when deemed necessary he is ordered about and reprimanded with little or no regard for the language used or his feelings regarding it. Such a man is a good example of the type which coloured people themselves call a "white folks' nigger," thoroughly disgusting and humiliating to all thinking members of their race. The coloured people who patronize these lines would breathe a deep sigh of relief if the railroads where these men are now found would displace them with a higher and better type of employee.

A new sphere of segregation and discrimination, not contemplated in the law but in actual force, is the taxicab and bus. Here again the vagaries of prejudice show themselves. In this instance we have, not a mere separation, but the blunt refusal of the companies operating these lines to carry coloured passengers under any conditions. This is not true in all cities. A traveller may go to one city—Nashville, for instance—and his patronage will be solicited by any driver; let him go to Atlanta, and a white taxi driver will not so much as hear him if he calls. As a consequence Negroes are compelled to accept such nondescript service as they may obtain from the various tramp taxis operated by their own chauffeurs, which situation, being only carelessly regulated by law, places them at the mercy of the driver when it comes to fees, which are invariably higher than the metred taxi rates.

Such operators, when coloured, in turn suffer the disadvantages of being entirely excluded from the regular parking areas before railroad stations and similar localities. As a result driver and passenger must literally hunt each other, sometimes over as much as half a block. Some variation in this order is met with when a railroad passenger travels on a transfer check which is part of the railroad ticket. In some cases the coloured passenger shares the bus provided for this service by the transfer company without discrimination, except that he sits in the

rear of the bus, after the practice observed on the street cars. In other cases the practice is to haul all the white passengers first, the coloured passengers waiting for the return of the bus. Of course, it sometimes happens that such delay may cause the coloured passenger to miss his connections, under which circumstances he either hires a taxi at his own expense or contents himself with missing the train.

Public bus lines are operated on the same principle. In some cities they carry coloured passengers in the rear, as the street cars do; in other cities they refuse to carry Negroes under any arrangement. Mention has already been made of the fact that in one city the coloured people established their own bus line to meet this condition, but they were eventually forced out of the field by an enactment of the city council aimed specifically at this arrangement. In that city to-day Negroes cannot ride on the bus lines operated for whites, nor can they operate lines for their own convenience. Elsewhere they may ride in local busses, but not on the express. Such are the vagaries of prejudice that enjoy the protection of the law and the courts.

Another curious form of segregation is practised on elevators in office buildings in many cities. In these places Negroes are forbidden to ride on any elevator save one reserved for their use but not exclusively for them. White people may ride on that elevator with coloured people if

it suits their pleasure or convenience; it is the coloured people who are forbidden to ride on the elevators for whites. There was a time when Negroes were forbidden to ride on any passenger elevator in such buildings. They were required to go to another part of the building, where a sign posted read: "This elevator for negroes and freight." There are hotels, North as well as South, where this regulation still obtains. Negroes are yet classified with goods, identically their status in slavery.

The foregoing is a description of one side of segregation as required by the law and observed in practice so far as it affects the Negro. Segregation as it affects the white man is an entirely different thing. Indeed, the white man is not affected at all except possibly in the street cars, when in some cities he may be asked to move forward to another seat in order to provide a seat for some coloured passenger who is standing. Except in rare instances it is in all other cases for the white man as though segregation did not exist; for there is no regulation as applied to Negroes that may not be waived for a white man. His movements are wholly unrestricted, and there is nothing that is not at his service or disposal; and everything is avoided that would humiliate or embarrass any white man in any way. Segregation for all practical purposes is without objection from the white man for the reason that it gives him the best of everything, leaves him with unrestricted freedom, and, most important of all, is so

arranged as to minister always and everywhere to his assumption of superiority over the Negro.

The Negro complains of segregation in travel as elsewhere for the obvious reason that he almost always gets the worst of it. Save for the exceptions already mentioned, segregation for the Negro in common carriers means inferior accommodations, neglect, inconvenience, and as often as not ill-treatment and abuse. For all of which he pays, and pays, too, the same price that the white man pays for the best service. And this rankles deep in his bosom, producing inevitably an ever-increasing contempt for the white man's standards of honour and justice and simple honesty; for the Negro thinks it just as dishonest for the railroads to advertise certain accommodations for a given price, and, when the Negro has paid the stipulated price, to deliver an inferior service—this in the eyes of a thinking Negro is just as dishonest as short weight at the grocery store, stale bread at the bakery, tainted meat at the butcher shop, or adulterated milk from the dairy. In the latter cases there are the law and paid officials to protect the public; but the law and the Interstate Commerce Commission, the paid defenders of the public interest in this case, are both asleep to the dishonest practices of which the Negro is the victim. Asleep—no, not quite—when called to its attention, the Interstate Commerce Commission says, "We can't see it." One wonders what would happen if the members of the

Commission were forced to travel for two or three days under the same conditions as those to which Negroes are subjected.

In extenuation of the principle of segregation the law specifically calls for "*separate* but *equal* accommodations." In a few instances the law is observed to the letter, it would seem. This is notably true in those railroad stations already erected when segregation laws went into effect. In many such cases the waiting room has been divided through the centre with an iron railing and the races assigned to separate accommodations on either side. In one case where no such arrangement was possible as to ticket windows, the one window is used alike for both races without remonstrance from any source. But inspection of toilets, lunch counters, and other accommodations reveals the true significance of segregation—inferior accommodations and neglect for the Negro.

It is this aspect of its application that makes segregation not only irritating to the Negro because of dishonesty in its practice, but humiliating because of its discrimination. Segregation as practised puts the badge of inferiority on the Negro, and Negroes everywhere believe that it is intended to do so by those who direct it. In an aggravated form it is impressed upon him by conductors, ticket agents, and other public servants, as they make open, palpable distinctions in their manner toward coloured people as compared with their attitude toward whites. At

the street car the conductor is busily assisting passengers aboard, especially women. A coloured woman appears in the line, perhaps "an old black mammy," and suddenly he stiffens, his whole manner changes—no coloured woman must be assisted under any circumstances; "it just isn't being done"; and a situation results that is in truth embarrassing alike to the coloured passenger and to the white conductor. For the natural impulses of kindness and courtesy prompt the conductor to assist the patrons of his line which advertises "courtesy, efficiency, service" among its accommodations. In the vast majority of cases one prefers to believe that the conductor does not want to embarrass his coloured passengers or deny them any common courtesy; but when such a passenger appears his whole white world shouts in his ears, "Don't do it! Don't do it!" And the kindly impulse is checked: his soul is dwarfed; he humiliates himself in denying the service; he is even in his own eyes a worse man instead of a better —*the* worse of the two instead of the better; and all for the sake of segregation—all to uphold a system designed to maintain the white man's claim to superiority and to insure that the white man has the best of everything while equally guaranteeing that the Negro does not receive anything that may tempt him to think he is in any way equal to the white man.

When he has outgrown his resentments the thinking Negro comes at length to pity the white man who is the

victim of this conception and this system of establishing "superiority." When a man must crucify his own finer impulses toward justice and honesty and even courtesy in order to establish his superiority over another individual or another race he is in reality degrading himself rather than the other, and of the two is the more to be pitied; for in the end it is he who is and must be the greater sufferer. For the man who is kept down may still preserve his ideals and his character intact; but he who keeps him down cannot do so without deadening his own sensibilities and searing his own soul.

It is ofttimes charged that when the Negro protests against segregation he is moved by a desire to mingle with white people. It may be admitted that there are in the Negro race, as in other races, a few individuals known commonly as "climbers" who covet the distinction, such as it is, conferred upon them by moving in circles to which others of their class and condition do not have access: the privilege ministers to their self-esteem, their pride and vanity. While they have themselves great satisfaction in it, they are not aware that they are alone in their estimate of themselves, that in the eyes of all others, both those whose company they seek and those whose company they spurn, they are looked upon sometimes with concealed and sometimes with open ridicule and contempt. There are such people in the Negro race, but their number is as small among Negroes as in the human family generally,

where they are not, after all, conspicuous, else life would be utterly intolerable; and means have been found to squelch them without laws and ordinances.

But for the vast majority of Negroes who protest against segregation in travel as well as in other activities, the impelling motive is a desire for comfort, convenience, and service such as the public carriers provide ungrudgingly for white people; whereas they are provided not at all for coloured people or only under protest. When a coloured passenger asks for a berth he asks for comfort pure and simple and would be happy if there were not a white person in the car. He will furthermore ride all day long without a word to anyone save the conductor and porter unless he is first addressed by some other passenger. In all the instances where coloured passengers have been ejected from Pullman cars there has never been a single instance in which the Negro interfered by word or deed with the comfort of any white passenger. In every instance it is the mere presence of a Negro that challenges the zeal of some valiant champion of white superiority to the point of demanding the expulsion of the Negro. In such cases what the thinking Negro observes is that such a demand comes from only one in a thousand white passengers; and second, that the protesting individual is not satisfied to secure a seat of the same kind in another car—he is satisfied only when the Negro is ejected.

As to the first observation, it is to be noted that the

number of Negro Pullman passengers is increasing every year as the economic condition of the race improves. These men and women, of whom there are hundreds, and even thousands, carried annually, are not to be distinguished in culture, refinement, intelligence, conduct, and personality from the general run of white passengers with whom they ride. Their colour alone distinguishes them from their fellow passengers, and often enough even this does not always serve such an end, hence the law requiring the passenger to declare his race when asked by the proper official. Where the coloured passengers are numbered by the hundreds, the white passengers are numbered by the thousands and tens of thousands; yet the number of cases of trouble from passengers complaining of the presence of a Negro is steadily diminishing in proportion to the numbers who ride. This points unmistakably to the fact that the great majority of white passengers are little or not at all disturbed about the presence of Negroes on the car so long as they are decently clothed, well behaved, and, it may be added, accustomed to the surroundings which they enter. The protester is the exception, the rare exception, and the rest of the passengers are usually silent while he indulges in his tirade. But it is this silence that gives him courage.

In view of this fact the thinking Negro wonders why it is that the thinking white man allows himself to be represented before all the world by the type of man

whose most conspicuous characteristics are his exaggerated egoism, his selfishness and domineering ways.

As to the other point, it reflects pretty clearly to the coloured man what seems to him the real animus behind all this segregation—the advocates of the practice are not so much concerned about their own comfort or moved by fears of contamination, as by a morbid repugnance to seeing coloured people amid scenes and circumstances with which they are unaccustomed to associate them. In the minds of such people Negroes are fixedly associated with poverty, ignorance, servility, and mediocrity, not to say inferiority, and to behold them amid circumstances suggesting affluence, intelligence, independence, and dignity conveys to them the suggestion of nothing less than a presumption which deserves instant and unmistakable rebuke, so they proceed to "put the Negro in his place." They think of themselves as the defenders of the white man's civilization, the advocate of the incontestable superiority of the white race, to challenge which is unmitigated impudence. This type of mind is the greatest obstacle to the Negro's progress along any line. It has fixed almost beyond possibility of change its conception of the Negro's natural and proper sphere. No amount of reasoning can alter that conception. To antagonize this idea is but to fix it more deeply; one thing only can change it, and that is, experience. Such people need to behold the Negro under circumstances different from those already

familiar to them; then, unless they are the victims of a neurotic psychosis, their ideas will change. Negroes can testify to the most unexpected conversions among white people of this type who were suddenly and unexpectedly thrust into experiences in which they have dealt with Negroes under more favourable circumstances outside their control, and so developed an entirely new mental attitude toward the race. Many a soldier in battle, a workman in a hazardous undertaking, a sufferer in distress, has come by such contacts to an entirely new appreciation of the character and rights of Negroes, and it is generally true that thereafter the Negro race has no warmer friends than such converts.

In the period since reconstruction it is probable, as has been observed, that segregation as a police regulation has obviated a great deal of friction between the races. But Negroes would urge that such friction as occurs where the races come in contact is precipitated by the white man's open resentment of the coloured man's presence where he is, while the Negro in turn resents the assumption that he is out of his place when sharing the conveniences of public conveyance and travel for which he has paid. But even as a police regulation it is accompanied by the injustice of penalizing the Negro whose right it is to share the public accommodations, while the complaining party, whose rights are in no wise violated but who

precipitates the difficulty, is left in complete enjoyment of a privilege that is the right of all.

Granted that some particular Negro is the offender, it is an anachronism in the law to visit the penalty upon the whole tribe or race. The effect of this disposition of the situation is to recognize a discrimination in class based upon colour and race, which the national constitution in the Fifteenth Amendment declared against in the province where it has specific jurisdiction. It is not a fantastic suggestion that the equities of the case would be better served if the separate accommodations were provided for that really very small class of white people whose sensibilities will not tolerate the presence of a *known* Negro.

The phrase "known Negro" is used because these people find no offense in a dark skin provided it is labelled Indian, Spaniard, Cuban, Chinese, Japanese, Turk, Bulgarian, Italian, French, or anything else than Negro. That it isn't a question of colour, too, is indicated in the fact that so long as a coloured man who is very fair, and there are many such, running into the thousands—so long as such an individual is not identified as a Negro, no one is disturbed; but let his racial identity become known and these hypersensitive individuals of a white skin immediately profess a sense of grave injury and proceed to disturb the peace of all around them.

Thinking Negroes wonder more and more why the law must be invoked to safeguard such petty prejudices

at the price of such widespread injustice to the offenceless. The only answer thus far given is frankly offered in some quarters: "This is a white man's country": developed for his use and enjoyment; whatever privileges other races may enjoy here are theirs not of right but of toleration; the purpose of the government is to safeguard the undisturbed enjoyment of the blessings of the land by such as can prove themselves descendants of unmixed Aryan stock. This is the type of Americanism that has devised and now supports segregation as a principle of racial adjustment. Negroes acquiesce in it because they are helpless. They acquiesce at times rather than endure continuous affronts or become involved in embarrassing situations in which the law and the courts are invariably against them.

To accept a required segregation is to accept the thesis of undesirability on which it is founded and to concede the assumption of inferiority which accompanies its practice. The thinking Negro sees this clearly: the unthinking Negro—if such there be—when it comes to this question, feels that there is something wrong about it. Among all classes it is resented as the most humiliating form of racial discrimination, with the least substantial excuse or justification.

Chapter VI

THE NEGRO AND THE LAW: SCHOOLS—HOUSING

THE principle of segregation having been accepted in law and sustained by the courts in the operation of the railroads and other common carriers, it was not long before it was introduced into the public-school system and later into private schools as well. The voluntary separation of the races in the public schools had already taken place, largely as a consequence of the way in which education was developed after emancipation. There were no public schools in the South prior to the Civil War. After the war the eagerness of freedmen to obtain the benefits of education caused a multitude of schools under private auspices to spring up everywhere. They used homes and churches indiscriminately wherever a group could be assembled for instruction. When later the much maligned reconstruction governments made provision for public support of education the practice of segregation was already in existence and needed no official enactment. This continued until the system had developed to the place where,

as in the higher grades, it was not feasible to provide privately the necessary facilities for separate schools, and the logical solution appeared to be that of having both races attend the same schools. But this was not to be tolerated, so normal schools—in reality high schools—and colleges for Negroes were organized largely under the patronage of the churches. But the schools were still separate, except that some private schools in the border states admitted Negroes to study with whites, as did also one or two state schools farther South. But when segregation as a policy of state was adopted it became a very simple matter to apply it to the schools, and the courts again approved it as a police regulation.

In the practical application of this policy the Negro is once more the victim. Segregation in the schools supported by public funds has for a long time meant for the Negro inferior accommodations and inadequate facilities. Not that the law so provides. In this matter the law is generally silent as to the nature of provisions to be made for the education of coloured children. In the public-school system, the school boards of the county or municipality are free to determine the character of education Negro children shall receive and the amount of money to be used for such purposes. Among state schools the practice is now in vogue of having the legislature fix the appropriation for the coloured schools. The effect of this policy on the total expenditure of these schools, the character

of their equipment, the length of terms, and the salaries of teachers is an interesting study in comparisons.

Under such an arrangement it is a foregone conclusion that more money will be spent proportionately for education for whites than for Negroes. How much more depends upon the state under observation, some states being more liberal in their policies than others. Take some figures from the last census (1920) which are typical of general conditions where separate schools are maintained by legislative enactment. In that year the state having the largest percentage of Negro population (52.2) gave to the Negro education 26 per cent. of the total appropriation for schools. This disproportion between the population and the appropriation for education was exceeded in one state where Negroes constitute 38.9 per cent. of the population but receive only 1 per cent. of the appropriation.

In two states—border states—the percentages of population and educational appropriation are nearly equal. In one of these they are respectively 5.9 per cent. and 5 per cent.; and in the other 25.7 per cent. of the population as compared with 26 per cent. of the appropriation. For the eleven states of the lower South the general ratio is 34.3 per cent. of the population to 11.7 per cent. of the appropriation.

A similar discrepancy appears in the figures representing the total valuation of public-school property for both

races. In the state where the percentage of Negro population is greatest (52.2) the property valuation for Negro schools is less than 20 per cent. of the total. Excluding the border states with a relatively small Negro population, the ratio of the average between population and property values in the eleven states of the lower South is as 34.3 to 9.5. In the same region the general ratio between population and annual appropriations for all educational purposes is as 34.3 to 12.01.

Of course, appropriations profoundly affect all phases of the educational situation. Another result is shorter school terms for coloured children than for whites. In the two border states where the appropriations for Negro schools are of the same percentage as the Negro population, the length of the school term as authorized for coloured children is the same as that for whites, namely, nine months; but in each of the other states which maintain an entirely separate school system for Negro children their school term is shorter by a period ranging from two weeks to two and one half months, where school terms for whites range from five to eight months. Such are the differences authorized in the school regulations: in actual practice the difference is often greater than that, school terms for coloured children in some rural sections being as short as two and three months.

The salaries of teachers are affected in the same way. The poorest paid teachers where separate schools are main-

tained are found in the states of the lower South where salaries range from $900 to $2,500 for whites and from $290 to $500 for Negroes. The best paid are in the border states, where white teachers receive from $900 to $4,500, while coloured teachers receive from $700 to $3,000. In considering these figures allowance must be made for the shorter terms for coloured schools and the general absence of the higher grades where the higher salaries are paid, and the practice also of grading pay according to the professional equipment of the teacher. But when due allowance is made for all these things the policy obtains here as elsewhere of paying coloured workers less than whites as a matter of principle.

It was at one time defended on the ground that the Negro could live on less than a white man and so did not require the same pay. As a matter of fact, Negroes must pay the same for clothes and food and rental and other items of living as other people pay; and in addition thereto the school authorities are happily now setting up the same professional standards for coloured teachers as for others. In three of the largest cities in the border states—Baltimore, Washington, and St. Louis—where there are complete yet separate systems for each race, the salary schedule is the same for all schools.

Until the last few years separate schools for Negroes also meant an abbreviation of the school programme for

Negroes, and it largely remains so now. The programme for Negroes omitted the high-school grades entirely, and in many, many places did not go beyond the fourth or fifth grades. Hence the existence of so many private schools for Negroes, for the most part under church auspices, whose function it became to supply this general deficiency in the programme of Negro education. Up until 1916, there were only sixty-four public high schools for Negroes in the entire South, and the majority of these were in Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

This situation was the result of two causes, one the insufficiency of public appropriations to provide a full programme of education for Negro children, and the second the prevailing prejudice against education for Negroes beyond the elementary grades. To supply this deficiency Negroes have resorted to the plan of operating their own schools in addition to those established by the churches as missionary projects. With the same idea in mind they have supplemented public appropriations by private contributions in order to lengthen the school term by one or two months, or to increase the salary of a proficient teacher.

No single influence has done more to stimulate improvement in Negro schools in the South, and particularly in the rural sections, than the activities of the Rosenwald

Fund, established in 1913 by Mr. Julius Rosenwald of Chicago, originally to promote the building of modern school houses for Negro children in the rural districts, but since extended in scope to include other phases of service in social advancement.

The plan of the Rosenwald Fund was to offer assistance in the building of a new schoolhouse in any rural community where Negroes would contribute as much as one third of the cost and the public funds one third, the balance to come from the Rosenwald Fund. So eagerly was this proposal accepted that since that time Rosenwald Schools, as they are called, have been erected in the twelve Southern states totalling more than four thousand five hundred in number and providing accommodations for more than 35 per cent. of the Negro rural school population of the South. The total cost of these buildings exceeds twenty million dollars, of which more than 20 per cent. has been contributed by Negroes, the largest portion coming from public funds.

The effect of this movement has exceeded all expectations. Not only has it stimulated Negroes in their efforts toward self-improvement, but it has provided the ground for active coöperation between the two races in the solution of one of the most serious phases of race adjustment in our country, at the same time giving a direct stimulus to education for whites as an indirect but positive result. Perhaps no movement in the last generation for social

advancement in the South has been of such far-reaching influence for the good of both races as the operations of the Rosenwald Fund, which are continuing on an ever increasing scale. This work reflects a statesmanship of the highest order on the part of its founder.

But the policy of segregation works most ruthlessly in the matter of public libraries. From these, Negroes in the South are completely and absolutely excluded. It is a well-attested fact that a certain Negro, recognized in literary circles as one of the most accomplished and distinguished prose writers in America, could not draw a copy of one of his own books from the public library of the Southern city in which he was then resident. Some cities have aimed to correct so manifest an injustice by establishing branch libraries for Negroes of which there are now twenty throughout the South, aside from those connected with the coloured schools, to which in some cases the public has limited access. But always the invariable corollary of segregation manifests itself—inferior equipment and organization growing out of inequitable appropriations.

Compulsory education has been introduced into the school regulations of the South, but of course it does not and is not meant to apply to Negro children as to whites. If it should it would embarrass, not only the school authorities to provide accommodations for the increased school population, but the parents also, who in many

cases must find work for their larger children in order to supplement the meagre family income, or must keep them at home to care for younger children while both father and mother—ofttimes it is the mother alone—are out at work. For a time the possible consequences of the rule where applied to coloured children prevented the enactment of compulsory education measures; but finally the measure was adopted, it would appear, with the tacit understanding that its enforcement among coloured people would be more or less lax, and that the minimum attendance requirement for Negro children would be less than for whites.

In education, then, as in other matters, segregation means distinctly discrimination, neglect, and inferior provisions for the Negro. It is true that there is a progressive improvement in the school facilities provided for Negroes in those sections where separate schools are maintained. Indeed, in the last ten years there has been a decided change in the public mind on the subject of Negro education. Prior to that time there was a large body of opposition to it, but the manifest advantages of industrial education have convinced the most skeptical of its desirability. There is hardly any opposition now to Negro education in principle, but in its actual operation the attitude is taken which gives to the Negro far less than his proportionate share of public funds based on the rates of population. Friends of the cause have been much encouraged by

the increasing appropriations for Negro education in the states where separate schools are operated.

North Carolina has been most active and most liberal in this direction. But even in this state a comparison of figures will show that Negroes receive far less than their proportionate share of public funds; more than that, the relatively large appropriations now being made represent practically the same percentage of the total expenditures as did the relatively smaller sums of a few years ago. School terms for Negro children are still shorter than those for whites; Negro teachers receive smaller salaries than white teachers of the same grade and qualifications; school buildings for whites are generally more attractive and better equipped than those for Negroes.

This same policy has been extended to the distribution of Federal appropriations for educational purposes under the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act. These funds supplement a similar amount provided by the several states, and the total sum is administered by state boards. The Smith-Lever bill provided a similar appropriation for agricultural extension work, which is administered in the same way. A separate organization is maintained for the work in each race. In both these fields the appropriation for work among Negroes is less than that called for on the basis of population. At the time these measures were enacted a strong effort was made to specify in the respective bills that the money should be expended on a

basis of population, but this move threatened to defeat the purpose of the measures entirely, the representatives of those states where segregation has legal sanction averring that their legislatures would not accept any Federal aid with such a condition attached, so the effort was discontinued. It indicates, however, how consistently the idea of segregation is interpreted practically as a warrant for discrimination in which the Negro suffers always the disadvantage.

Perhaps the effect of segregation in education is most graphically indicated by a comparison of the amounts spent for the education of the individual child in each race. Among the eleven states of the lower South the highest annual appropriation for the education of a Negro child is $11.88 as compared with $21.02 for the education of a white child in the same state: the lowest is $2.74 for the Negro child as compared with $27.88 for a white child in that same state, in which state also the disproportion in total amounts is greatest. In the state which carries the largest total appropriation for education, the Negro child receives $20.24 as compared with $31.77 for the white child. In the state where it is smallest, the ratio is $7.33 to $42.01. In the six border states the appropriations are more nearly equal. In the state where the proportion most nearly approaches equality the ratio is $15.40 to $16.60; the lowest in this group is $17.17 to

$34.70. Where the amount spent on the Negro child is absolutely the highest in the lower South, the proportion is $20.24 for the Negro child as compared with $31.77 for the white child: in the border states the highest is $64.40 for the Negro child and $76.00 for the white child. Always, everywhere, when we have segregation the Negro child gets less.

Such are the plain facts. When Negroes contemplate this situation they have mixed emotions. On the one hand there are some distinct advantages to the Negro in separate schools, advantages to the child and to the race as a whole. The most obvious advantage as things now stand is in the opportunity for employment which these separate schools provide for Negro men and women as teachers. This means roughly the engagement of some fifty thousand adults in gainful occupation with an aggregate annual income of $15,000,000. Along with the policy of separate schools there was adopted the general policy of using Negro teachers in this work. This practice is universally followed now, but until a few years ago, two large cities—Richmond, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina—continued the use of white teachers in the coloured city schools; in Richmond this was confined to the high school, but in Charleston they were used in all grades. This anomaly has happily disappeared.

Aside from the economic gain to the Negro in this ar-

rangement there is the incalculable gain in racial development involved in the organization and discipline of the schoolroom, together with the development of leadership in the educational and civic world that goes with it. Leadership in the Negro race immediately after emancipation was confined almost wholly to preachers and politicians. The introduction of separate schools, both public and private, has opened the way for the development of a new type of leadership for the race which has been urged as a strong justification for the movement.

The church schools, established by what are distinguished as the white denominations, at the first used only white teachers, mostly from the North. In time these schools began to engage Negro teachers along with white teachers; and in recent years there has developed a strong tendency to operate these institutions entirely with Negro faculties. In several of the larger institutions of learning this step has already been taken, and it will not be long, many believe, before it will obtain in most of the denominational schools.

There is some advantage, too, to the pupil in this arrangement of separate schools. It is a simple fact that where there is any considerable Negro population in America a certain degree of race prejudice sooner or later asserts itself. Whatever its cause, it certainly exists, and so soon as children come to self-consciousness they become exceedingly sensitive to it; and for the average Negro

child it operates as a repressive force. When countenanced by his elders in mixed schools its effect is to exclude the child from the normal associations of school life and deprive him of the natural channels of self-expression.

It is a recognized fact that in those places where the races attend the public schools without discrimination, there is a progressive falling off in the proportion of Negro children enrolled in these schools with the advance in age and grades, until the numbers graduating from such high schools are relatively negligible. On the other hand, where separate schools are maintained the percentage of children enrolled in the higher grades is normal as compared with white children of the same age and grade. This, in itself, is regarded by many as a great gain, and the readiness of parents to avail themselves of such facilities shows the extent to which it is accepted for that very advantage.

Such acceptance, however, does not mean ignorance of, or indifference to, the disadvantages of this arrangement. Always the objectionable corollary of inferiority accompanies the separate school. However attractive may be the provisions for coloured children, those in authority see to it that the provisions for white children are better, and such discriminations will obtain all through the system. And of all things Negroes resent most these persistent, insidious implications of inferiority.

When the advantages are weighed against these disad-

vantages many Negroes would accept the separate schools with their disadvantages but for the further consideration that the matter does not end there. In those places where separate schools do not exist such a proposal is but the first of a series of measures in a general programme of segregation. Accepted in the schools, it is applied elsewhere without legal sanction, but with the tremendous weight of this precedent behind it, which Negroes are practically powerless to offset. The effect in the large is to create a prejudice against the Negro which furthermore may not be eradicated for generations.

The thinking Negro refuses to accept the idea that race prejudice is natural and inevitable, that it is inherent in the child, either white or black. He insists that it is acquired and cultivated, and that the greatest single aid to its cultivation is segregation. He therefore protests that where separate schools are maintained we have the case of using the public-school system as a medium for cultivating a conception of society directly opposed to the democracy upon which our own national life is founded. Those who fight for the maintenance of the public-school system without discrimination aver that the public schools are the great agency for the cultivation of a democratic outlook, and to exclude the Negro from the free and normal contacts of this system is virtually to drive him beyond the pale of democracy, is deliberately to declare against his participation in it at the very threshold of life.

Thus assiduously cultivated under the sanction of the law, its ultimate eradication would seem to many to be almost next to impossible. Certainly this much is true, that where separate schools exist the rule of segregation is an accepted principle of society in general. Its first legal application may be in the schools. In protesting it here the protestants assert that nothing can prevent its general extension once it is accepted at this point.

Just here, in fact, is the dividing line between two distinct schools of thought within the Negro race. There is one group that insists that the Negro cannot safely accept a legal separation at any point, or separation of any kind, legal or voluntary. His only safety, it is contended, lies in placing the law on the side of his unrestricted participation in all public privileges, while he works out as best he may the problems of personal prejudice. It is this group which finds its ideas and reactions best represented by such an organization as the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, which is devoting its energies to the legal aspects of the problems of race relations to secure the just and equitable interpretation of existing laws as applied to Negroes and to prevent any further legal discriminations against the race.

On the other hand, there is the group which takes the position that the Negro can afford to accept segregation where it is forced upon him, and perhaps in some instances adopt voluntary separation for the advantage it will give

him in fortifying the race to meet the issue of inferiority in those spheres where legal enactments neither help nor hinder him. This group would contend that prejudice is created in this latter field, in the contacts of adult life in the outer world; that the removal of prejudice there can be accomplished in proportion as the Negro equips himself to battle on equal terms in these fields of activity where prejudice does not condition in the least any man's ability, and where a demonstration of equality in actual achievement will go further toward eliminating prejudice all round than any amount of legal protection in an atmosphere already prejudiced. The ideas of this latter group are perhaps best represented in the social philosophy of such institutions as Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes and similar schools—in fact, in the philosophy of all schools operated for Negroes as such.

The two groups are alike opposed to legal segregation in principle; both regard it as undemocratic and unchristian, as unfair in principle as well as in practice. In truth, they are working for the same thing in different spheres and by a different approach. Segregation is no more acceptable to a Negro in Atlanta than it is to a Negro in Detroit, though the Negro from Atlanta may tell you after a longer or shorter stay in Detroit with its prejudices that he feels more at ease in Atlanta, for there he knows just what to expect. It is accepted anywhere only because the Negro believes that eventually and by various means the

white man will come to see that a common enjoyment of public privileges by one man in contact with others, whether he be black or white, does not in the least reduce the benefits that accrue from them to any other individual. They are like the light, shared alike by all, but without diminishing the illumination of any.

Housing

The most acute phase of race relations is that which has developed over the housing situation. It is not a consequence of the Negro's backwardness, but rather of his advancement. It is the second stage of development in race contacts and is typical of a group of questions now rising as a result of the Negro's progress toward American ideals and standards.

There was a time when the question of housing for Negroes practically settled itself. Where the Negro should live was determined by his position in the economic scale. This being low, he lived where living was cheapest, on the outskirts of the town and in the least desirable sections of the city. Ofttimes he exercised a sort of squatter's right and settled on almost any spot without even owning the land. In most cases he rented a cabin or a box house of two or three rooms cheaply constructed, without living conveniences of any sort, at a relatively high rental. It was natural that those of a like condition should live amid similar surroundings, so without legislation of any sort

Negroes as a group occupied a common area which was usually designated by a characteristic name such as "Black Bottom," "Cooney Hollow," "Thompson's Quarters," "Hell's Kitchen," "Sibletown," Buzzard's Roost," or "Bug Hollow," derived either from its association with the race or some tradition as to its location or development.

Such sections as these represent only a small financial investment from which the income was usually more or less uncertain, so the owners of such property, mostly white, could see no reason for any further investment in improvements after the original outlay. The same attitude was assumed by public officials with the result that until recently in almost every city the section of the community in which Negroes live was the most unattractive, the most neglected, and by those tokens the most undesirable section in which to live. Except in the very largest cities, that in general is still the case. Civic authorities make no provisions for the care of the streets in this section; water and sewage mains do not extend to these parts; electric or gas lights are not available either for the homes or the streets; the police visit here only when sent or called in; and, worse than all, it is frequently the location of the "red light" district operated and patronized by whites. Altogether the Negro section of these cities is a wholly undesirable section in which to rear children. And it has been so recognized not only by the people who must of necessity live there, but, perhaps unwittingly, by

leading citizens whose civic enterprise from time to time would move them to carry visitors through this section as one of the sights of the city—ostensibly to show how backward the Negroes were. Few stopped to consider how much of the responsibility for such conditions rested on the white property owners and white public officials charged with the direction of public works and civic improvements.

Let it not be imagined that Negroes were or are content with such conditions. Evidence on this point lies within the interior of these homes, many of whose occupants have used every means available to their limited resources to make these places neat, clean, and attractive on the inside. As quickly, however, as improved economic conditions would permit Negroes have over and over again sought better homes elsewhere. Public officials refusing to give relief in the section where they were already living, the only remaining step was to find a home in a section where the desired conditions obtained and the desired facilities could be found. This meant to find a home in a section previously occupied by whites only. At one time this was possible without serious objection in any quarter. And so all over the South where residential segregation is not in force, white and black can be found living side by side without friction or unpleasantness and with mutual respect and good will. In truth, legal residential segregation does not obtain in every

community in the South. It was in some of the larger cities that the agitation for its adoption was successful, and the practice was enforced until the Supreme Court's decision declared it unconstitutional.

The question, however, continues to arise as the economic condition of the Negro improves, and with it comes the desire for better living conditions. It has arisen too in those communities where the Negro population has been suddenly increased by industrial developments, and where it became absolutely necessary for this excess population to find housing in those sections previously occupied by whites only. It is this movement of population that has given rise to the most serious race conflicts of the period since the World War. These have occurred in Northern, Central, and Western cities where the congestion has been greatest. Even here, however, the question of residence has been a secondary issue, the main question being the matter of competition in labour, for the shifting of population and the continuous extension of the Negro residence section goes on without further outbreaks of violence.

Another aspect of this problem presents itself when some individual member of the race, more prosperous than the rest, seeks a home and surroundings better suited to his tastes and his means and purchases a home in a section of the city, and perhaps in a block where Negroes have never resided except as servants. Their presence in many

instances, though not always, has been resented with violent attacks upon the dwelling with the object of making the situation so unpleasant as to lead the newcomer to abandon his purpose of living in this place. In some cases the new owner has been given police protection until the agitation has subsided. In other cases the occupant has undertaken his own defense.

The most notorious case of this kind developed in Detroit, where one of the occupants defended the recently purchased home with arms and was acquitted by a jury of the death of a supposed member of the attacking crowd. In a great many instances, perhaps in the majority of cases, the first flurry of resentment has died down and the occupants have been left in peaceful possession of their property. Sometimes the white neighbours have moved away, selling their property to other coloured people; as often as not they have remained and treated their new neighbours with courtesy and consideration, discovering meanwhile that Negroes can make as agreeable and desirable neighbours as people of any other race, that here as in many other matters the personal equation is the determining factor.

The agitation growing out of incidents of this character is frequently used as the occasion to charge the individual Negro involved with seeking "social equality," a very vague term by which is usually meant social contact with white people. Now most persons who make this

charge are ignorant of the housing conditions among the mass of coloured people in their city, and so, of course, do not understand the simple truth that when a Negro purchases a home in some quarter of the city where Negroes have not lived before he is in reality endeavouring only to improve his surroundings and to obtain the comforts and conveniences of living not otherwise obtainable. Investigation will usually disclose that the individual in question has been practically forced to buy among whites if he is to make any improvement at all. And it frequently happens that there are several other members of his race ready to take the same step once an opening has been made.

There is an economic advantage in such transactions not to be overlooked. The seller in such cases generally obtains a higher price for the property when a Negro is the buyer than he would obtain from another white person. The number of such places available to Negroes is limited as compared with the number available to white people, the question of general location being a large determining factor. The Negro buyer, while seeking to improve his situation, does not want to be far removed from the Negro residence section in general, for business or professional reasons. The instances are quite exceptional where a Negro family have found it desirable to remove from all proximity to members of their own race, and

when it does occur their own people usually look upon such cases with some misgivings.

It is also something of an advantage to a Negro to buy such property rather than to build. In most cases these residences were built some years before and, in face of economic readjustments which have taken place generally in the last fifteen years, it would not be possible for anyone to build such a home for the figure at which one of these places can be bought. The property is itself less desirable through natural causes than it was when first erected: but between all these factors it usually brings a higher price from a Negro buyer than from a white buyer, and that is why the original white owner is willing to sell to a Negro. There may be, as is usually claimed, a temporary decline in the market value of adjoining property among white prospects, until the tide of Negro invasion sets in, when the value immediately rises even to higher levels than before.

On the other hand there seems to be no evidence that white neighbours have ever suffered any intrusion upon their privacy from coloured residents in their section, unless mere proximity is to be construed as such intrusion. Indeed, the basis of all such complaint in this and similar matters seems finally to rest on the point of mere proximity. There are those white people, relatively few, happily, who do not want to have a Negro in sight of them

enjoying the same privileges as themselves. It is thus that the "equality" comes in; and the fact that the circumstances are of the type usually described as "social," with its implications of leisure and recreation, completes the concept "social equality." Such proximity is obviously unavoidable wherever any two persons share the same public privileges, but only when one party is a Negro does the implication of equality appear to take on validity.

It happens all over America that two white people may live in proximity to each other for years without even so much as addressing each other, to say nothing of establishing even the imputation of social relations. But in some places all this is changed if one party happens to be a Negro, and the law is invoked to declare that the individual who is white is injured by any such proximity to a Negro. In the matter of residence, however, the Supreme Court has declared such legal segregation unconstitutional. Since then various cities have attempted to establish this form of discrimination as within the zoning privilege, but the plan has failed of enforcement.

Another subterfuge is the plan of having all the white property owners in a given area agree mutually not to sell their property to any Negro within a prescribed limit of time. The Supreme Court has not yet passed on the merits of this practice. In the case recently before it, the Court declared that the appellants who sought the restraint of such a practice in the city of Washington had

not based their appeal upon grounds of which the Court could take cognizance. It has been held, however, that such an agreement is not binding upon a subsequent white purchaser of any such property, unless he specifically accepts the original agreement in the terms of the sale. In the event he does not he is himself free to sell to a Negro purchaser.

It is worth while to emphasize the fact that Negroes make such purchases of homes in white residential districts solely with a view to improving their physical surroundings. Some cities have in very recent years begun to include the Negro section in their general plans for municipal improvement, and where this happens Negroes have voluntarily established improved residential sections in which their neighbours are all of their own race.

Gradually the housing condition is adjusting itself without legislation and without discrimination against the Negro. True, there have been difficulties such as fluctuations in property values and some physical violence, but in the last analysis, where the scales of justice have been held with an even balance, the properties that have thus changed ownership from whites to blacks have registered a market value and a rental value higher than before. The much heralded "Harlem," the Negro district of New York City, is a case in point, the property having been occupied first by whites and then by Negroes. Gradually this area is being extended with the influx of Negro

population from without the city and the shifting of like groups from residential sections downtown. The whites are constantly moving North, once with grumbling and complaint, but now in general recognition of economic and social laws to which an advancing civilization is everywhere subject.

Chapter VII

THE NEGRO AND THE GOVERNMENT: THE BALLOT—THE COURTS

WHEN the Negro was brought to America in bondage in 1619 it is doubtful if anyone foresaw that the day would come when citizenship would be conferred upon him. And long before the independence of the colonies was established the institution of slavery had already been challenged on both moral and economic grounds. The subject was discussed when the Constitution was under advisement, and the matter compromised by omitting all reference to it in that document as then drafted. It finally precipitated a Civil War. The emancipation of the vast majority of the slaves by proclamation came at length as a war measure, which was afterward ratified and made general by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. By a subsequent amendment—the Fourteenth—citizenship was conferred upon the freedman; and the Fifteenth Amendment was designed to protect him in his right of franchise.

The effect of these three amendments was to guarantee

to the Negro his political rights as a citizen of the republic; that is to say, his right to full participation in the activities of government. At the same time the effort was made to establish by constitutional amendment his right to full enjoyment of civil privileges; that is, his right to share on equal footing with all other citizens the benefits of all institutions maintained at public expense, or operated by the public with the consent or the protection of the government. This amendment, while proposed, failed of adoption, as did several subsequent "Civil Rights Bills" designed to effect the same result. The failure of such legislation left the way open for those measures since enacted in various states discriminating against people of colour in the enjoyment of public privileges.

For a brief period Negroes everywhere exercised the right of franchise in what are now referred to as the "Reconstruction Governments," governments set up by federal authority for the several states participating in the secession movement. The political activities of this period were shared in by Negroes, Northern whites who either remained to make homes in the South when the war closed, or who came South to establish their political fortunes after the war was over, and by Southern whites, of whom there were not a few who sympathized with Republican principles and found no difficulty in accepting the conditions laid down for reëstablishing the place of the states in the Union. Impartial investigation will es-

tablish the fact as observed elsewhere that all the white men participating in the reconstruction governments were not political renegades from the North; nor were the governments wholly without benefit to the states where they existed. Their first duty was to adopt new state constitutions in conformity with the principles of national government established by the outcome of the war. In spite of the transfer of political power that followed shortly thereafter these constitutions remained effective for administrative and political purposes for as much as thirty years thereafter.

The second constructive achievement of this period was the establishing of the public-school system in these states. Until this time education in the seceding section had been wholly a matter of private initiative. Now for the first time the South provided education for all the people at public expense. Public almshouses for the poor and indigent were established at the same time. Still another task for the reconstruction governments was the rehabilitation of public finance which had been wrecked by the war. What with the general poverty produced by the devastation of invading armies and the demands of the unsuccessful Confederacy, there was need of instant relief if Republican government was to function. In spite of acknowledged abuses, such as are still encountered in public affairs—municipal and state, as well as national—these governments laid the solid foundations for the fiscal

affairs of the states which permitted their subsequent complete rehabilitation. It would seem, therefore, that the Negro's participation in government even at that early period of his freedom was not wholly to his discredit or conclusive evidence of political incompetency.

Undoubtedly the Negro vote was the controlling factor in the political affairs of these states. Voting solidly, the Negro vote of reconstruction days was as fixedly Republican as the white vote has since been Democratic. In any division of sentiment among whites the only hope of the minority was to eliminate the Negro vote entirely. This step was eventually undertaken—first by intimidation. The shotgun was used to keep Negroes away from the polls at election time. But such crude methods could not prevail indefinitely. They were sufficient, however, to obtain control of the legislatures and of constitutional conventions, where the more refined process was used of so defining the qualifications for the right of franchise as effectually to secure the elimination of the Negro vote without at the same time disfranchising any appreciable number of white voters, a condition which obtains to-day.

To this end three devices were used—a property qualification sufficiently high as to be entirely beyond the reach of the great majority of Negroes under the economic conditions obtaining in these states; a literacy test to be applied by white election officers of the party in control; and an enabling clause, commonly known as the "grand-

father clause," which, by exempting the descendants of war veterans, of course including the Confederacy, to the second generation, from the application of these possible disqualifications, insured that white men in general would vote by what is practically manhood suffrage. Since the World War the veterans of this latest struggle have been accorded a like exemption. The result of these successive measures, beginning with the shotgun, has been very effectively to discourage the Negro's participation in the political life of these states. So much so that in spite of the decision of the United States Supreme Court, declaring the "grandfather clause" and its accompanying legislation unconstitutional, there has been no sudden or appreciable activity on the part of the Negroes toward political organization or control as some might expect. In most places it has been difficult even to get them to register when qualified: although it is not such a great while since an election board in one state declared a Negro graduate of Harvard ineligible to vote under a literacy test, even though at that time he was and still is an executive officer of one of the most prominent educational foundations operating in the interests of Negro education, and known to be such by the board that passed upon his application.

Equally effectual in debarring the Negro from voting has been the primary system of nominations, the contention being that regulations debarring the Negro from

participation in the choosing of candidates do not come within the constitutional definition of the franchise privilege. One state (Texas) quite specifically debarred Negroes, and a test case brought to try the constitutionality of this provision, after being decided against the Negro in the courts of that state, has only recently been passed upon by the Supreme Court of the United States in a unanimous decision that the law as framed in that state is a clear and direct violation of the amendment of the Constitution. Other states have achieved the same result by measures not so obviously in contravention of the Constitution.

Here again it may be said that the operation of the restrictive franchise has reduced friction between the races and eliminated actual physical violence; but that is to say that we have peace when the Negro surrenders what he himself believes are his rights, and what in many parts of the country are freely recognized as his rights. It sometimes makes the Negro think that in the last analysis all his rights may be qualified by the objections of some white man, or small group of white men. The truth is that when such objection is very persistent public sentiment and often private advice insist that the Negro yield. Now the thinking Negro does not protest the restricted franchise as such, but he does protest its unequal application; he does protest the intentional exemption of the white man from its operation.

But beyond these legal restrictions the Negro recognizes the force of public opinion which just now is generally hostile to his exercise of the franchise in any way to make it effective. This hostility can make itself felt in a great many places other than the polls, so that mindful of those dependent upon his labours for sustenance and hoping for an eventual change in these conditions, he goes on his way without much public protest and also without the one defense of a freeman in a republic, the ballot.

It should be said, however, that since the World War a change is discernible in public sentiment on this question of the Negro's participation in politics even in those sections where the franchise restrictions have operated most effectively. In several of the large cities since the war the Negro vote has defeated municipal measures which ignored the interests of the coloured people, and in others it has been sought actively by white citizens to aid in the defeat of certain legislation felt to be against the best interests of the community in general. But we are far from the time when by the ballot the Negro can openly and directly register his protest against hostile legislation and his disfavour toward avowedly hostile legislators. The success of a certain type of political leadership which based its appeal for support on an open antagonism to the Negro could never have been possible in any commonwealth where the Negro could register his counter protest with the ballot.

The thinking Negro insists that the white man's civilization is as safe with a ballot in his hands as it is with a bullet or bayonet in his hands. He is proud of the fact that in every war for his country's advancement or preservation he has had a worthy and honourable part; nor was he regarded as a menace to his white comrades. By his record in civil life he would set up a claim to such an equal share as a citizen in its government as he bears in its defense as a soldier.

Besides, the Negro feels that he has other interests of his own that need protection. There is the question of his very life, always in jeopardy at the hands of a mob, against which neither the national government nor any of the states has yet evoked an effective protection. No other class of citizens can be attacked with the impunity that follows an attack on a Negro, whatever his character or condition. It is no longer claimed that the mob spirit is inflamed only by assaults or attempted assaults on women. In many sections any open conflict between a white man and a Negro is enough to instigate a mob attack to "teach the Negro his place." Sometimes it results fatally, sometimes not; it depends largely on the temper and determination of the mob.

Foreigners have the protection of their home governments, which can promptly set in motion the machinery of our federal government for the protection of their nationals. Where the law fails any white man in this

country can defend his own life and be vindicated therein by the courts, but in many parts of America the black man has neither the protection of the organized force of government, nor will the public sentiment or the courts justify him in the defense of his own life and property. Thus he is denied both personal and civil means of protection.

To the Negro it is not a matter of consequence whence the protection comes, whether from the federal or state government, so that it is a protection on which he can rely. The appeal for a federal law grows out of the feeling that a federal enactment can be secured long before action can be secured in each of the several states where lynchings occur, and for the further reason that the federal courts are less affected by the pressure of local sentiment, so that they act more promptly and with more vigour. If anything the Negro would really be better satisfied to know and feel that the government of his own state will accord him that protection. One feels more secure in the knowledge of the good will and support of his immediate neighbours than in the constructive protection of police headquarters fifteen blocks away when he lives in a hostile neighbourhood. The Negro does not disdain the protection of the several states, but as yet he simply does not have it.

The very effective obstruction to federal legislation on this subject as recommended by successive presidents is

in the last analysis due to the fact that the obstructors cannot be reached with the ballot by the very constituency whose interests are at stake and by virtue of whose numbers they exercise this very control over legislation.

The Negro has property and other interests also at stake in this matter of the ballot. At bottom the reason for the neglect of the Negro section of the city by public officials is the pressure that is brought to bear by other elements of the community that have the ballot wherewith to influence the distribution of public funds. Bond issues for civic improvements, education, recreational facilities, and the like, are authorized by vote of the citizens. Those who vote have their interests provided for in the provisions of the act; those who do not vote have no one to speak for them. It is wholly consistent with the processes of a Republican form of government that the voteless element should find its interests uncared for. The interests of American womanhood are protected, not by the men, but by their own ballots. Politics in America is far more practical than ideal; the interests of the Negro will be adequately protected when he has the ballot. And this does not necessarily reproach the white man, neither does it mean Negro domination. It means simply that the Negro is his own best spokesman, and that in justice his vote will be permitted to count for what it is worth and no more. In the wake of the Civil War conditions were abnormal. The vote of the Negro was employed to give

him a power out of all proportion to his interests; the consequences to him are still apparent.

By whatever means it was done, the restoration of a normal balance of power as between the interests of the white man and the interests of the black man was bound to come in one way or another. But it has swung as far in the opposite direction as it did in the first movement. The interests of the white man suffered no more serious violation during reconstruction than have the interests of the Negro since reconstruction. Statesmen of the South must freely admit that society and government in the South have been established far beyond the remotest possibility of disorganization through adequate protection of the interests of the black man by the use of the ballot in his own defense. Statements to the contrary are made only for political purposes in arousing an indifferent electorate.

As matters now stand the Negro in those sections where he is without participation in the government is in effect the white man's ward save that he still retains some right of initiative. Following reversal of the political control of reconstruction the white South asked the privilege of dealing with the Negro alone and in its own way. For all practical purposes this privilege has been accorded this section by the tacit consent of the rest of our country. For a generation the South has treated the Negro as its ward, with results that speak for themselves. Com-

pared with his former estate as a slave, the South itself admits that he and it are both better off economically than ever before; compared with the status of his fellow citizens of other races he is still politically nearer his former status as a slave than his contemplated status as a freeman.

This position as a ward constitutes a very effective check upon his development, and it has been so used. Unblushingly the South declares a different code for the Negro from that for the white man. This is true in practically every direction, in business and government and as well in morals and religion. It is this differing status without definition and without constitutional sanction that is not only irksome to the Negro but manifestly inequitable and unjust. He feels that artificial and often arbitrary restraints are placed upon his development and progress, not only to safeguard the interests of the white man from the possible abuses of ignorance and incompetence, but as often and perhaps more often to insure an advantage to the white man and a degree of ignorance and incompetence in the Negro that will avoid the individual hazards of a too keen competition.

As for control of the government by Negroes, municipal, state, or national, it is doubtful if there is one thinking Negro of American birth who either desires it or would want to see it come to pass in any future which he

can visualize. His observations of Negro control in those countries where it does exist have not been sufficiently reassuring to make him wish to try the experiment here. His own experiences at home in other fields are not sufficiently satisfying to make him desire their further extension on a great scale. For be it remembered that the churches, schools and fraternal organizations, clubs and societies that the Negro does control do not constitute his major interests or, to any significant degree, except for a few individuals, affect his personal fortunes. They are either a sideline in business or a pleasant and sometimes profitable social diversion.

The substantial progress and prosperity that have come to the Negro in America have in almost every instance been achieved with the active aid and encouragement of the white man and under a government controlled by an experience measured in centuries where the Negro's experience is limited to a few short decades. There is no telling what jealousies, strifes, dissensions, and conflicts have been avoided in these relations to the white man's civilization and government. The simple fact stands out that the advance of the Negro in modern civilization has nowhere been so rapid and substantial or on so large a scale as right here in America, and for that matter in the South. This fact would seem to establish at least two definite conclusions: first, that the Negro can survive and advance

in the midst of the white man's civilization without grave hazard to himself or to the white man; and second, that a degree of separation of the races, equitable and voluntary following the natural lines of social cleavage, is still the most favourable condition for the development of his latent capacities. Were the matter put to a vote the overwhelming majority of Negroes would vote for a continuation of the balance of power in the hands of the white man, but at the same time ask for that share in the exercise of power as would insure a proper consideration of his aspirations and adequate protection of his interests.

It is significant that during the reconstruction period, when the Negro was represented both in the state legislatures and the national congress, there were no disabling laws passed against the white man and no legislation enacted specially favouring the Negro. When he came to power, albeit but recently a slave, he legislated like a free man for freemen without prejudice or discrimination. As much cannot be said for the governments that succeeded his. The Negro feels that the time has come when in justice to his interests in the public welfare he should at least have representation by members of his own race in such legislative bodies and on such administrative boards as control directly and specifically the fortunes of his own people. The race has developed to the place where it cannot afford to be rash or radical in advocating public policies. Negroes have property at stake, homes to safeguard,

business and professional connections with both races that act as a stabilizing influence in their thinking. Notoriously the most radical group in any civilization are those with least at stake. There are very substantial reasons for conservatism among Negroes to-day.

The Courts

More serious than his exclusion from the legislative functions of the government is the Negro's experience with the judicial branch. The Negro knows, perhaps better than he knows anything else, that his chances of securing justice in the courts in those sections of the country where discrimination is in other things legal and common are so slim that in most instances he has nothing to gain by resorting to the courts even for litigation with members of his own race; while it is accepted by most as a foregone conclusion that no court anywhere will render a judgment against a white man in favour of a Negro plaintiff. A Negro defendant may occasionally get a favourable judgment as against a white plaintiff, but the reverse is a far more frequent possibility, so much so that a Negro very rarely brings suit against a white man for any cause in those states where relations between the two races are more or less strained. It is figured that to do so will involve a man in fruitless litigation, with the original loss augmented by the cost of the action. In spite of all the injustices and abuses from which Negroes suffer, one

seldom hears of a court action brought by Negroes against any white person in our Southern states.

It is interesting to note just how this sentiment manifests itself in the various processes of the courts and administration of the law. That phase of the courts most nearly free from prejudice against the Negro is the judiciary. It should be said to the credit of the bench that it is doubtful if any judge anywhere has been led by personal prejudices of his own to permit the perversion of the law in dealing with a Negro; but this is scarcely necessary. Other parties to the suit can be depended upon to give full expression to their prejudices by means that bear every semblance of legitimacy. Nevertheless, there is abundant room for the tilting of the scales by the bench, as well as by the bar, the jury, and the officers of the law, if it should be felt necessary.

It is a matter of common experience that the court will impose a heavier sentence upon a Negro when convicted of a crime than upon a white man convicted of the same crime. So much so that the infliction of the death penalty upon a white man for the crime of murder is a matter of newspaper comment. Along with the news report of it mention will be made of the number of years since a white man was executed in that state or county. Not that white people do not murder one another or murder Negroes, but that a white man is sentenced to death only when the crime is peculiarly atrocious; and it almost never happens

when the victim is a Negro. In recent years white men have been convicted of murdering Negroes in a certain Southern state under circumstances that even the newspapers regarded as particularly atrocious; but they were finally sentenced to life imprisonment on recommendation of the jury that convicted them.

Now, when the situation is reversed and it is a Negro who has killed a white man, the handling of the case is too notorious to need discussion. An exception frequently occurs, however, when the guilty party is a Negro woman and the victim a white man. In such a case the outcome will vary all the way from no trial to life imprisonment, with the death penalty a rare exception. In these cases the attendant circumstances play such a part that even the srongest prejudice will not ignore them. When the defendant is a Negro man and the cause of action a white woman, if the charge be murder or rape, the chances of the case reaching the courtroom are to-day about equally divided between the prisoner's case being decided by the court or by "parties unknown to the jury." Most unusual and to that extent most gratifying to Negroes everywhere was the outcome of a case of this kind in a Southern state not long ago, where a jury acquitted a Negro youth of a charge of rape in the face of his identification by his supposed victim in open court. Over against this set the action of a mob of another state which lynched a Negro immediately after he had been acquitted of a charge of murder by a

jury of white citizens, the victim being seized by the mob at the very door of the courtroom.

But in general the statement holds good that the sentence meted out to a Negro will be heavier than that for a white man, whether that sentence be a term of imprisonment or a fine or both. Not all of this, however, need be charged to the prejudice of the court. Some part may and often is due to the fact that the white man has more friends in court than the Negro and can bring more influence to bear upon his case in entirely legitimate ways than the Negro can summon. No small part of the early experience of a young white attorney at the bar may be gained by appointment of the court to defend a Negro who is without council; and it has happened that such a prisoner has been tried and convicted without even this formality.

It is a recognized fact of court procedure that a verdict may be influenced by the atmosphere of the court. The Negro is fully aware that in most cases where he is concerned the atmosphere is prejudicial to his case. Sometimes it is assumed beforehand that he is guilty if a white person is involved, not only by the prosecution but by all concerned, including the spectators. If white men have recourse to a change of venue on the ground of local prejudice, how much more likely is it that a Negro would have similar ground for such an appeal? But not often, if ever, does one hear of a change of venue granted to a

Negro defendant on such a ground. The haste with which the trial of a Negro is frequently conducted undoubtedly reflects the influence of such prejudice.

The most palpable indication of prejudice in the court will be in the recurring references to the Negro defendant in the course of trial as "this darky," "this nigger." Several judges in various districts of the South have in years past won distinction and grateful esteem among Negroes and some degree of odium among whites by rigidly excluding such references from their court. But such a course is not yet general on the bench. Public sentiment will not yet sustain it, and judges in many sections are still elected by popular vote, or appointed with popular indorsement. So long as this is true the bench will to a greater or less degree reflect the general attitude of its environment.

When it comes to the bar, it is to be expected that every device that has any show of legitimacy will be employed to secure a conviction, and the simplest and at the same time the most powerful influence that can be brought to bear for the conviction of a Negro is an appeal to race prejudice in the jury. This is particularly effective where the plaintiff is white. It is the favourite device for offsetting damaging testimony from Negro witnesses or the defendant. The attorney of the prosecution either skilfully or crudely challenges the jury to accept the testimony of a Negro over that of a white man, with its im-

plication of disloyalty to the white race. And it is very rare to find a jury that will accept the uncorroborated testimony of a Negro in condemnation of a white man. Contemptuous allusions to the witness are made throughout the taking of testimony, designed to weaken the credibility of his testimony on the ground of his being a Negro. Such is the common and accepted practice in the courts in cases where Negroes appear either as defendants or simply as witnesses. The white man is supposed always to get the benefit of the doubt, and the introduction of a Negro into the case is sufficient in itself to create that doubt.

The prevalence of this atmosphere in the courts is so strong as virtually to debar Negroes from practising in the courts of the South. An occasional Negro attorney is found in the larger cities, but his practice is seldom that of a trial lawyer, but rather as an adjuster of cases and an adviser in civil processes. When a Negro gets into serious trouble he employs a white lawyer, and, too, the best he can obtain. With a coloured lawyer he is likely to add to the prejudice of his case unless the parties to the action are all Negroes; should he be involved against a white man, it is essential that his attorney be a man whose ability, personality, and prestige may in themselves operate as far as they can to overcome the prejudice against his case, irrespective of its merits in the law. And it may be said that when so engaged such white attorneys handle

their clients' cases with the utmost zeal and ofttimes with conspicuous ability. These men often take great pride in defending the interests of a client who has so much against him at the outset. A successful defense of such a case is a testimonial to professional ability as well as strength of character, which gives the attorney undertaking it a high rating at the bar and in public life generally. None know better than his colleagues at the bar what disadvantages he has faced and what handicaps he has overcome in a successful defense of a Negro client.

Of course, there is no limit to which a jury may be influenced by local sentiment. Shrewd attorneys count on this as much as upon evidence to secure a conviction. A judge may indeed set aside a verdict of conviction as contrary to the weight of evidence; but it would be a rash judge who would do it in the face of conditions such as these. He may satisfy his conscience by instructing the jury to find in favour of the Negro defendant, but if the jury should fail to do so it is scarcely probable that a new trial will be ordered—a rare procedure, at best, and all the more unlikely in the case of a Negro. It has indeed happened quite recently in South Carolina with results now notorious—the lynching of the three defendants, two men and a woman.

An honoured phrase in the procedure of the courts is "a jury of his peers." When a Negro is involved it is observed most in the breach, unless it be thought to pay an

extra tribute to justice by selecting a jury regarded as his superiors. Otherwise we have a situation in which the South officially recognizes the equality of white men and black men. But a doubt is placed on this construction when the names of the Negro citizens are sedulously omitted from the jury panel. An exception is sometimes permitted in juries of the federal courts; but these instances are rare and are usually traceable to a lingering political influence, a survival of reconstruction politics which is gradually disappearing. As matters stand to-day it would be impossible to secure an entire jury of Negroes to try a Negro defendant, even if all parties to the case should be Negroes. On the other hand, only once in recent years has a higher court set aside a verdict because a Negro was not on the jury.

Negroes very generally feel that they have better chances for justice before a judge than before a jury. This is especially true in the matter of appeals, where the merits of the case are placed squarely before the bench. It is notably the case as regards the Supreme Court of the United States. Negroes feel that the Constitution of the United States gives the question of their disabilities a strong case in law, and that if they can succeed in having a point at issue adequately placed before the Supreme Court they will not only get a full and fair hearing but will receive a verdict in favour of their contentions of equality in all civil relations. This sentiment has been

greatly strengthened by the notable decisions of the Court on questions of fundamental interest to the Negro: the first was the decision of the Court handed down in declaring invalid the legislation, popularly known as the "grandfather clause," in the state constitutions of the South which effectually disfranchised the Negro. This decision was all the more impressive to Negroes because the opinion was written by Chief Justice White, a native of Louisiana. The second was the decision of the Court in the residential segregation case that came up from Louisville declaring that all such legislation was in contravention of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution.

Of almost equal significance to the race in defining the relations of black and white in this country was the recent decision in the Rhinelander suit for annulment of the marriage between an admittedly white man and an admittedly coloured woman of mixed blood. In this case the point at issue, so far as Negroes were concerned, was not the desirability of a union between two such persons, but the legal rights of the individual with Negro blood where such a union has been contracted. The annulment of that marriage would have meant the sweeping away of the protection of the law from every Negro woman anywhere who has contracted such a marriage, and of every woman who for whatever reason enters into such intimate relations with a white man, of which there are

a multitude of cases, far more perhaps than either race would care to admit.

In the case of Berea College of Kentucky where suit was entered to restrain that institution from segregating its Negro students and diverting funds to the exclusive use of white students, some of which had been donated under the representation and prevailing practice that the school was for both races, the Court held that there was no specification in the law or deeds of gift requiring the common use of the same facilities by both races; and that in requiring the separation of the two races in distinct institutions the state was exercising a police power for the preservation of the public peace wholly within its rights and discretion. But Negroes feel that in this instance and by this means the court purposely avoided an issue which, in the interests both of the Negro and the general public, as the Court construed them, it were well not to pass upon at that time. Negroes generally believe that when this question of the civil rights of the Negro, such as are involved in the whole practice of segregation, is placed properly and squarely before the Supreme Court, that its decision will be unavoidably in derogation of all such practices.

The Negro's attitude toward the courts may be summed up in this wise: that where the decision rests with the bench he can expect substantial justice; where it rests

with the jury his chances of justice are in direct correspondence to the prevailing sentiment of the section where he is tried, with the odds generally against him.

Nowhere, in all phases of the government, is the sentiment against the Negro more unblushingly demonstrated than among the officers of the law, those whose duty it is to handle the person of those who through guilt, accusation, or suspicion come within the notice of the law. Nowhere is the white man more overbearing than when, with the sanction of the law, which is to say with the organized support of society, his society, he is dealing with the person of a Negro. In many places an indignant retort from a Negro is sufficient occasion for an arrest for "disorderly conduct"; the attempt to run from an officer to avoid arrest is sufficient for killing the offender for "resisting an officer of the law." The third degree in examining Negroes becomes unnecessary—any guilty circumstance or the statement of the arresting officer is often sufficient evidence for conviction. In prison the most palpable distinctions are made between white and Negro prisoners in food, clothing, bedding, facilities for cleanliness and personal hygiene, privileges and rules. Always everywhere the principle is carefully maintained—a Negro must not under any circumstance receive the same consideration as a white man—he must have no occasion to think of himself as being as good as a white man. This

is one of those sacred traditions, happily disappearing, that a certain type of white man feels must be upheld at any cost.

The home of a Negro may be entered and ransacked without the formality of a search warrant. They have even been entered and searched by officers of the law in the absence of the occupants, windows and doors being forced open to secure admission. That axiom of English law "a man's home is his castle," does not yet apply to the Negro any more than the other accepted principle of democratic government that "all men are created equal with equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; and the one equally fundamental, that "a man is presumed to be innocent until he is proven guilty," with its corollary, "the accused is entitled to the benefit of the doubt."

Again, it is simple truth to say that for a great many white people in this country, and they are not confined to any one section either, the utterance of the loftiest human sentiments is not intended to be of universal application; there is a tacit reservation concerning the Negro. This was particularly apparent during the World War and afterward. Under the leadership of President Woodrow Wilson the sentiments of "democracy," "self-determination," "equality," "justice," "liberty," "fraternity," and such like reached around the world. America's Negro citizens were buoyed by a great hope that the day of their

redemption was close at hand, that a new sentiment would prevail throughout the land, righting old wrongs, restoring balance to the scales of justice and opening the door of opportunity without restriction or discrimination. The first great shock of surprise came to the Negro troops in France who, when they arrived, found that the old sentiments had been deliberately and painstakingly sowed in advance of their coming and in far more aggravating manifestations frequently than they had felt them at home.

In French villages the word had been spread that Negroes were vicious and depraved, wicked and loathsome, little more than beasts. Unsuspecting women and children, entirely ignorant of the English tongue, were taught the coarsest and vilest epithets to hurl at Negroes by way of greeting. When disillusionment came from actual contact with black soldiers with just the opposite effect from that intended, it was to discover to the French that "fraternity" does not mean in all parts of America what it means in France; that it has reservations attached to it, as do other things.

Even at home it was feared that Negroes would take literally what was used inspirationally, so the word was sent out to them and to their brothers and friends at home that when the war ended things in the good old U. S. A. would be "as they were." It would be false to say that the Negro soldier was not disappointed in this atti-

tude, this thrust in the back from his white comrades-at-arms; but it is wholly true to say that he was not surprised. He faces it still in those places in this country where Negro ex-service men are not permitted, of course, to join white posts of the American Legion; neither are they permitted to organize posts of their own, in spite of the fact that all around them campaigns are carried on to increase the membership of the American Legion, and their friends are besought to buy "buddy poppies" and to subscribe to memorials to war heroes. What wonder that the world acclaim to America of the war period should have turned in many places to execration! Men who have been defamed abroad by their own comrades while fighting for their common country, who found no stars for them in their community service flag on returning home, who have been forcibly stripped of the uniforms which they have consecrated with their valour and blood, and have finally been denied the privilege of registering their names among those entitled to their country's praise and gratitude—these men can understand what a great many others do not, that reservations to truth and justice will forever return to plague those who wink at the practice.

In the light of these facts it ought not be difficult to understand why the reproach is so often hurled at the Negro that he does not coöperate with officers of the law in apprehending criminals and those accused of crime. To the Negro the law where these practices obtain appears

not as an instrument of justice, but as an instrument of persecution; government is simply white society organized to keep the Negro down; and the officers of the law are its agents authorized to wreak upon the helpless offender the contempt, the indignation, and the vengeance that outraged law and order feels when stimulated by prejudice. There is no such hue and cry over crime when the victim is a Negro and the perpetrator either white or black as when the victim is white and the suspect is black or supposed to be black.

In one large city where such conditions obtain as are described above a total of twenty-eight Negro women were brutally done to death over a period of three or four years, the crime in each instance being committed either early in the morning or late at night, the victims being servants going to or returning from their work. The perpetrators have never yet been discovered or apprehended. That is the same city in which the report of three alleged attacks by Negroes on white women was sufficient to lead to an organized attack on the whole Negro population of the city in one of the worst race riots in the history of our country, the casualties of which in their true figures have never yet been published.

The apprehension of a Negro accused of a crime is a duty of officers of the law; but if the crime be a felony perpetrated against a white man or woman it is sufficient occasion to be made into something like a grim sport in

which the public may participate under cloak of the sheriff's deputizing them as a "posse." Not so many years ago such an event would be reported by the newspapers as accompanied by great excitement and fears of trouble: now everything is done with quietness and order, wholly without excitement other than the crowds, containing women and children, that are in at the death, with the attendant photographers and the inevitable souvenir hunters, and on really great occasions several excursion trains—all done so quietly and secretly that no one in all the party can be identified later. Such are the lengths to which discrimination in the law may lead, to an utter disregard for the law when a Negro is the subject.

Thus there is no telling what may happen to a Negro when he falls into the hands of an officer or officers of the law, nor is there any degree of certainty as to his fortunes and condition when the courts have finished with him. As a consequence Negroes often do not feel that in giving information to the authorities concerning one of their own race they are upholding the majesty of the law or serving the ends of justice: rather do they feel that in doing so they are more likely to be parties to some gross injustice and almost traitors to their own race. It is true that many Negroes have friendly relations with individual officers of the law, judges of the court, and other public officials; but in the abstract coloured people generally regard the law as an organized system for exploit-

ing those of their race so unfortunate as to fall into its clutches, and the officers of the law, not as their protectors, but as official representatives of prejudice and discrimination that have legal sanction and encouragement.

On the other hand, those outside the race can scarcely conceive the humiliation and indignation that Negroes feel when one of their race is guilty of a heinous crime, whether against a member of his own race or of another race, and especially when his victim is white. Added to revulsion of feeling arising from the crime itself are the shame and embarrassment growing out of the known tendency among whites to attribute the same defects in character to the entire race and to use the crime itself as a further justification for the prevailing discrimination against all Negroes. Where there are Negro officers of the law, and when Negroes have a reasonable chance at justice in the courts, there is no complaint that they conceal crime any more than the people of other races, or are unwilling to coöperate in the maintenance of law and order. They understand full well that their strongest protection, such as it is, is the law, and that the final support of the law is public sentiment, whether that sentiment be for or against them; and that in the last analysis they are protected by the law in so far as it reflects a public sentiment for right and justice, and no further.

Chapter VIII

THE NEGRO AND THE GOVERNMENT: PUBLIC OFFICE—PUBLIC POLICY

THE reference just made to Negro officers of the law is a single phase of the larger subject of the Negro's position in relation to public office, to offices of public trust. Along with lynching, residential segregation, and disfranchisement, this has been the subject of much public agitation, of which there has been less in recent years than formerly, for the very sufficient reason that in those sections where the discussion revolves around the race of the officeholder, the Negro has been practically eliminated as a factor in the administration of government. Offices of public trust are closely related in America to politics. There is an apparent exception in those cases which come under the civil service rules; but this is only apparent, for when necessary or desirable even these are subject to political manipulation.

The Negro's relation to offices of public trust is therefore subject to practically the same influences which af-

fect his political status. Whether the office is filled by election, civil service examination, or by executive appointment the Negro faces the same sentiment that he encounters elsewhere in life. There is less of it in some sections of the country than in others, but it is apparent everywhere, though its manifestations have certain variations that are peculiar to this phase of the question. Where Negro population is proportionately greatest there the Negro has least chances of election to office. This is adequately taken care of by the virtual disfranchisement of the great mass of Negroes in those sections. When the Negro was first given the ballot representation in the legislative branch of state governments was more nearly in accord with the proportions of population, and at no time was the white man excluded from representation. This, of course, was during the reconstruction period.

Then as now the bulk of Negro population was found in the South. For a brief period eight of these states had Negro representatives in the Congress of the United States. The state of Mississippi was represented for a total of seven years by a Negro senator. In 1870 and 1871, one of the two senators from Mississippi was a Negro, Senator Hiram R. Revels, a free-born Negro originally of North Carolina, a graduate of Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, who was a preacher and lecturer of prominence and raised two regiments of Negro soldiers during the Civil War. He was chosen by the state legislature of Mis-

sissippi as senator for that state, where he then resided, and took his seat in Congress in February, 1870. Again, in 1875, Mississippi sent to the Senate the Hon. Blanche K. Bruce, who represented his state with recognized ability and distinction for a full term of office. As a boy he was educated with his master's son, and later went to Oberlin College, an institution to which many planters sent the children of their Negro slaves who had special claim upon their masters' interest and attention. He was born in Virginia but spent his youth in Mississippi, where he later taught school and became active in politics, being at one time Sheriff and at another Superintendent of Schools. For a number of years after his retirement from Congress, he served as Register of the United States Treasury. His son is a graduate of Harvard and his grandson also a student there. Mississippi has had no occasion whatever to be embarrassed by the character or record of either of her two Negro senators.

There were, of course, more Negro representatives in the House than in the Senate. In all there were twenty-one Negro representatives in this body from eight states covering a period of twenty-six years. Of this number eleven served for one session of two years each, and one for one year only. Six served for four years each, two for six years, and one, the Hon. Joseph H. Rainey, from South Carolina, for ten years. All of these were men of more than average training and ability and suffered none in

comparison with their white colleagues of the House, either those from their own states or those from other states.

The last Negro representative in Congress was the Hon. George H. White from North Carolina, a college graduate and a practising attorney who served four years, retiring in 1901. As matters stand it is hardly probable that a Negro will again sit in the Senate for some years to come; but with the increasing Negro population in Northern states and their congestion in great numbers in the larger cities, it has come about that once more a Negro has been elected to the House of Representatives, the Hon. Oscar DePriest from Illinois, a significant development in the last presidential election.

In the state legislatures the Negro was for a time without representatives following the reaction of the post-reconstruction period. But in 1917 a Negro was sent to the legislature from New York City as a member of the lower house; since when Pennsylvania, Illinois and Missouri, Ohio and New Jersey, have each had one or more Negro members of the legislature who have won their places after contests with white members of their own party. The first among all the states to elect Negroes to the legislature was Massachusetts, where two were elected to that body from Boston in 1866.

In this question of representation the Negro has only the matter of the franchise to complain of. Given the

freedom of appeal to the voters and the right of the voter to cast an unrestricted ballot, he is willing to take his chances with all other candidates and subject himself to the usual hazards of politics. What his chances under present conditions are may be seen from the figures on the Negro vote in those states where the aggregate of Negro population is greatest.

As concerns other offices of public trust, it is significant that when Negroes had the power there was no attempt to fill positions calling for training and skill with men having no qualifications for the office, simply because they were Negroes. As a matter of fact, while Negroes were sitting in the state legislatures and the Congress of the United States, practically all other offices were filled by white men of at least the average ability required for such offices. The executive, judicial, and major administrative positions were filled by white men exclusively, an indication that Negroes either did not have the unlimited power in reconstruction days so often attributed to them, or that they had vastly more sense than they are usually credited with. So to-day there are few such positions occupied by Negroes. The District of Columbia and Chicago have each a Negro on the bench of the municipal court, and in various smaller cities, here and there, where Negroes vote without restriction there are to be found Negro justices of the peace who have been elected by votes from both races. Quite naturally these elections are at-

tended by no particular excitement and are wholly without racial antagonisms.

If the candidate for office can go so far as to obtain a nomination it is evident that race prejudice is at a low ebb. Indeed, it frequently happens that a Negro candidate fails of election not so much because of the opposition of white voters, but because the Negro voters will not give him their solid support. In those places where race discrimination is practised least, there the Negro vote is less subject to control by a racial appeal. The Harlem district in New York has for years been in a position numerically to send a Negro to the United States Congress; but as yet it has not been possible from various considerations, not necessarily unworthy, to solidify the Negro vote behind a Negro candidate: and in the last election two leading Negro citizens declined the nomination, and a white man was elected over a Negro candidate. The same thing happened in the city of St. Louis where a Negro Democrat was defeated in the contest for Congressman by a white Republican. Surely white supremacy cannot be in much danger under such conditions. It would seem rather that as time goes on the Negro's interests attach more and more to the common interests of society and less and less to the issue of race.

The question naturally arises in the mind of the thinking Negro: Would it not be the wisest statesmanship to enlarge the Negro's interests in the common welfare by a

constructive policy of development, rather than to stimulate an abnormal race consciousness by studied repression and artificial restrictions? Isn't it wiser and safer for all to make of him just a free American rather than a segregated Negro? It is interesting that America in general fears the segregation of all other elements of its population and exerts every effort to "Americanize" its alien groups; whereas in the case of the Negro it has largely accepted a policy that is just the reverse of this.

The German who insists on being only a German, the Catholic who insists on being only a Catholic, the Italian who insists on being only an Italian, and the Jew who, of course, insists on remaining only a Jew, are alike regarded as a hazard to American institutions; but when a Negro insists on being an American he is told, and sometimes from very high places, that it is to his best interests and to the best interests of the country for him to remain only a Negro, the best possible Negro, but distinctly a Negro; and in America, as is everywhere apparent, that carries with it the constant corollary of discrimination and disadvantage.

The storm centre, however, of opposition to Negroes in office is around the appointive positions, which are for the most part administrative. This opposition and agitation follow the line of legalized discrimination. Appointive positions are generally regarded as the reward for political activity. It is not surprising that where public

sentiment does not want the Negro to vote it should also oppose his holding office; and since the appointive positions involved are administrative there is injected the added factor of Negro control. Here we are brought face to face with the fact that a large element of whites in all sections of the country resent the idea of authority in the hands of a Negro. In some sections it represents such a radical inversion of former conditions as to be virtually intolerable; in others it is simply the feeling, more or less common to all of us, that there is somebody else as well qualified to fill the office and more deservingly than the present incumbent. There are more than enough "deserving" white people to fill several times the offices available for political patronage.

Since disfranchisement became effective the number of office holders among Negroes has become progressively smaller and the available offices have diminished in importance. For a long time the highest appointive positions to be filled by Negroes were the Registry of the Treasury at Washington and the post of United States Minister to Haiti. For a number of years these posts were filled successively and successfully by Negroes. But a change was made in the first of these by the appointment of an Indian to the office, apparently in response to two pleas—the one that the Negro should not be the official chief of a number of white women, notwithstanding that the head of this department had no contact with the great majority

of his subordinates; and the other that the dignity of the nation was affronted in requiring the signature of a Negro to make its currency legal. The first argument was satisfied in the appointment of an Indian to the post, and the second compromised by removing the signature of the register from the currency and substituting that of the Treasurer of the United States, who by tradition is a white man. Since then the signature of the register has been restored on some bills.

After a long period of highly successful service by Negro appointees the ministry to Haiti was transferred to whites, when the Marines took over the government of Haiti. Such a step was certainly logical in the premises, whatever one may think of the justice of the whole Haitian procedure. For the rest the appointments of Negroes to public office have been mostly largely in the postal service and in the Treasury, War, and Navy departments. The number of the strictly appointive positions is exceedingly small when compared with the total of the whole country, and in itself hardly sufficient to raise the storms of protest that in the past have frequently accompanied such appointments.

But it is the appointments which come under civil service regulations that afford the largest opportunities for Negroes to hold public office, and offer the most patent instances of discrimination on account of colour. There are to-day more than fifty thousand Negroes em-

ployed by the government. The vast majority of these, as already mentioned, are to be found in the various departments at Washington and distributed throughout the country in the railway, mail, and local post office service. Many of these are clerical positions, a few of them administrative. Here is where discrimination shows itself strongly in the service of the government. Though there are no regulations to that effect, there is a recognized limit beyond which Negroes may not rise, regardless of their efficiency or their length of service. The principle in general is maintained that Negroes shall not be placed in administrative authority over white people. The consequence is that unless some entire branch of the service is turned over to coloured people there are few administrative positions of consequence which Negroes are permitted to fill.

An interesting step in this direction was taken in connection with the establishment under the Veterans' Bureau of a large hospital exclusively for coloured ex-service men. At the time of its establishment the question was raised as to the personnel of this hospital, as to whether it should be all white, all coloured, or mixed. It was finally decided by those in authority that it should be all coloured, on the ground that the patients being all coloured it was appropriate and right that the administrative force should also be of the same race. Here we have official recognition given to the principle of separa-

tion of the races, but in this case at least technically without discrimination in equipment, standards, or rating. The hospital is one of the largest of its kind in this country and most modern in its equipment, and in its management has proved one of the best in the service.

An interesting device is employed, however, to practise discrimination in the making of appointments under the civil service regulations without adopting a specific regulation against Negroes and apparently without violating the principle of equal opportunity which the system is supposed to afford. As originally conducted, appointments were made in the order of rating, the highest in rating receiving the appointment. The inflexibility of this method often resulted in appointment of candidates who, though well qualified technically for their posts, were otherwise unfitted, perhaps temperamentally or even physically, for the place. Some such consideration would be raised, however, when, to the frequent surprise of those most immediately concerned, associates and superiors, the successful applicant was a Negro.

At first the impulse would be to hold faithfully to the rule and make the appointment regardless of consequences. In some instances the Negro incumbent went about his work with such efficiency and tact that his racial identity was forgotten and he continued to serve without protest. In other instances, and more fre-

quently, the appointment raised a protest on purely racial grounds, with the consequence that the Negro's position would be made so unpleasant as finally to lead to his voluntary resignation; or else in due time a zealous inspector would see his way clear to recommend the dismissal of the objectionable incumbent "for the good of the service." But this method was too cumbersome and awkward. Ere long a rule was devised of making the three applicants with the highest rating equally available for appointment; and, when later the applicant was required to furnish his photograph with his application, an almost perfect system had been devised for eliminating Negroes without violating any specific regulation or officially sanctioning discrimination on account of race.

In all of this, however, the matter of race is the primary consideration. There is on the one hand the question of whites being subordinate to Negroes; and more subtle than this and more generally accepted as valid is the objection to personal contacts between whites and Negroes of either sex on any basis whatever. And behind it all are the social aspects of the matter, which are of dominant importance; and the higher the position the more significant is this phase of the question. In some sections and for some people the holding of public office carries with it great social prestige, and it is an accepted practice of American life to employ to their utmost value the advan-

tages of social contact as a means of influencing political and business activities, to say nothing of the purely social pleasures and possibilities involved.

It is this consideration more than any other that demands exclusion of the Negro from all places where such contacts are possible. In this way Negroes are denied admission to the military academy at West Point and the naval academy at Annapolis. For a time after the Civil War an occasional Negro student was admitted to West Point, not more than a half dozen in all, and less at Annapolis, but with the gradual acceptance of the final validity of these social considerations the time came when none were admitted. In the army itself the same principle has applied. Until the World War no Negro was in command of a regiment, even of troops of his own race; and there were only a few coloured commissioned officers. When America entered the war and the number of Negro regiments was largely increased thereby, the grade which Negroes could attain in the army was raised to colonel with corresponding elevations to the grade of major and captain.

But the ranking Negro officer of the regular army, a West Point graduate with the grade of colonel, was not raised to the rank of brigadier general along with his white colleagues of the same grade, being retired at that juncture on the ground of physical unfitness. In the ranks the Negro private faces the same practice of discrimina-

tion by being designated for service in labour detachments rather than combat or garrison service. The Tenth Cavalry, one of the crack regiments of the regular army, commanded at one time in his career by General John J. Pershing, from which fact he got his army sobriquet, "Black Jack," is detailed for service at West Point to care for the horses of cadets; the Twenty-fourth Infantry is likewise detailed for labour at Fort Benning, Georgia.

In the World War, both at home and in France, Negro troops were used above all others for the manual labour of the American Expeditionary Forces; and in one sector such soldiers as were under arms were ordered at one time to appear without arms for review by the Commander in Chief. In the same spirit of discrimination white soldiers refused to salute Negro officers until ordered to do so from headquarters, the interpretation prevailing that they saluted not the man but his position and insignia of rank, just as they saluted the flag as a symbol of their country. Many Negro officers with discretion found it convenient to look the other way when passing white soldiers to avoid the necessary consequences of the ignoring of service regulations. Negro soldiers have little reason to cherish enthusiastic memories of their experiences with the A. E. F. either in America or in France.

Thus generally in the service of the federal government the principle of discrimination is recognized and in many cases sanctioned. The city of Washington, which is di-

rectly under the jurisdiction of the government, in most public places follows the rule of segregation, separation, and discrimination. The noteworthy exception is in the street cars and taxicabs, but at recurring intervals some congressman offers a resolution demanding segregation in these; but thus far all such measures have been buried in committee.

In all these matters the immediate problem for the Negro is to prevent the extension of the practice. Those who find satisfaction in such an arrangement are very zealous for its introduction wherever they go. Not content with its observance in their home districts, they demand its practice for their satisfaction even in sections where before it was not in existence; and very frequently public disturbances are created by the demand of some such sensitive individual for the expulsion of a Negro whose presence on terms of equality with himself offends his susceptibilities. Occasionally such a person will be told that no change will be made even if it means the loss of his patronage.

But those who wish it are often very persistent in their demands and usually successful in their efforts. Those who oppose such extension have little to plead except the American principle of equal opportunity for all. It often pays in a way to let it go by default. But it may be observed again concerning those who object to the presence of the Negro, that they have rarely been seen to forego

the privilege which the Negro shares: they insist always that the Negro be the one to leave. This class seldom if ever refuse to ride on the elevator reserved for Negroes; it is the Negro who is forbidden to ride on the other elevators.

The practice of segregation and other forms of discrimination on the part of the federal government is the occasion of the greatest discontent and dissatisfaction to the Negro. This is because the practice is in direct violation of the principles of our democracy and because it lends encouragement to the extension of similar practices in sections where they were previously unknown. The Negro has learned to accept with some degree of complacency and to accommodate himself to the public opinion which has given legal sanction to discrimination on account of race in one section of the country. There is no open agitation looking to the immediate overthrow of such legislation as handicaps the Negro in his struggles for advancement in the section where the race is found in largest numbers and where contacts between the races have in the past been accompanied with the greatest friction.

But the thinking Negro feels that there is a serious menace in the acceptance of this principle in the administration of the federal government similar to the one inherent in the gradual extension of slavery and the recognition of legislation in free territory designed to protect

the interests of slave holders. It is felt, and that very strongly, that the adoption of the principle in the administration of the federal government paves the way to its universal extension; and for this reason it must be resisted with the utmost vigilance and energy. He furthermore feels that whatever may be the justification for the acceptance of the principle of discrimination in one fourth of the states of the Union it is manifestly unfair that the sentiments of this one section should determine the attitude of the nation as a whole. Negroes do not hesitate to admit that they hope to see the end of discrimination. Their apparent acquiescence in it in some sections of the country is merely a reflection of the Negro's faith that the ultimate and entire elimination of such practices will come, not so much by organized legislative propaganda as through quiet processes of education in its broadest sense. The Negro feels that the nation has declared itself once for all in the amendments to the Constitution on the question of equality of all of its citizens. With this as his justification he is resolved to realize in fact by every honourable, righteous, and peaceable means what has been thus established in principle at such great cost both of blood and of treasure.

Public Policy

Segregation, as thus far described, is of the type established and enforced by law. It could hardly be made

effective in any other way. There would be too many Negroes to deal with and too many avenues of approach to guard. But there are spheres where the action of individuals is sufficient to effect a discrimination amounting to segregation which is as thoroughgoing as any created by law. Defend such action by subtle interpretations of legal principles and you have a situation which needs no specific legislation to secure its effective working. In this class comes the segregation practised in restaurants, theatres, churches, hotels, barber shops, and similar places of public accommodation and recreation.

In a restaurant the end is achieved by persistently ignoring the coloured patron. His patience is sooner or later exhausted, and the humiliation will prevent his repeating the experience. The room clerk in the hotel need only say "We have no rooms" and the business is done. At the box office of the theatre they tell you the house is all sold out; and it matters nothing if a stream of patrons is all the while purchasing tickets. Because you are a Negro they will not sell you a ticket; and without a ticket one can neither pass the door nor obtain a seat. So this experience is rarely sought a second time.

Where legal separation does not obtain and where, as in some states, the right of any patron to obtain service in a place of public accommodation is definitely protected by law, the principle of segregation is put into operation by directing the patron to certain tables or

seats set aside for that purpose by the management of the restaurant or theatre. In the sections where legal separation of the races is in force the common practice is to exclude Negroes entirely from hotels and restaurants, and from certain theatres whose management estimates there is more profit in maintaining an exclusively white patronage than in reserving the uppermost gallery with a side entrance for Negro patrons, as is the practice with many houses.

More often the Negro is told frankly with many expressions of regret he cannot be accommodated because of his colour, and the practice is established to be generally extended as time goes on. Some states have definitely prohibited such discrimination in all places of public accommodation with penalties including damages to the complainant for each offense. Nevertheless, discrimination is practised in any case; but the Negro in such places has this advantage, that it has no sanction in law, and for that reason he may expect that it will ultimately disappear. But where the discrimination is sanctioned in law the practice extends from one sphere to another, and from one place to another. A striking evidence of this latter tendency was presented recently in one state where discrimination of this sort is a recognized and honoured custom among whites. At a prominent educational institution for Negroes in the state, whose faculty for the most part is white, it has been the practice for many years to

make no discrimination in the contacts between the two races at any public assembly. In this institution there have met men and women of both races and from both sections of the country for exercises and celebrations such as Commencement Day, Founder's Day, and similar occasions. Always, however, the utmost care has been employed to avoid any possible embarrassment to guests of either race by the tactful handling of situations that might involve social considerations. In recent years this school has presented in its auditorium various attractions of distinction in artistic circles which have elicited the patronage of white people from near-by cities. These patrons were seated indiscriminately among the attachés of the school. To some local whites not connected with the school this arrangement was offensive, and an agitation in protest developed which finally culminated in the passage of a bill by the state legislature making mandatory the provision of separate accommodation for white and coloured people in all places of public assembly. Thus has the field of segregation by law been extended into a region where there was no demand for it by those most directly affected. Here we have a private domain invaded with the authorization of the law to introduce discrimination where none had previously existed, and by persons who in demanding it did so in contravention of their own traditions.

The same practice obtains in some churches on the

rare occasions where the issue arises. In the days of slavery many white congregations reserved the gallery in the rear of the church for the slaves of their members. Should a Negro enter one of these churches to-day he would either be sent to the gallery or placed on the last seat on the main floor. But Negroes very rarely trouble white people in their devotions—a matter about which most people, white or black, are very sensitive. There are a few congregations in the South where for sentimental reasons an occasional aged Negro is permitted to retain his membership in a white church, but with due regard, however delicately managed, for the sacred traditions which demand a distinction between black and white; no new members of the Negro race are ever received.

For a long time Negroes were forbidden even to enter the public parks of the South except as servants with white children in their care. They are still for the most part forbidden to occupy a bench in such places, while playing there by Negro children is entirely out of the question. The rise of interest in recreation has led to the establishment of municipal golf links, bathing pools, and beaches. From these Negroes in some sections are rigidly excluded. Several of these cities have established parks for their Negro citizens, and playgrounds where the general policy of inferior accommodations is faithfully adhered to. They have not arrived at bathing pools and golf links for Negroes yet—except in the capital of the na-

tion, where segregation under the eye of the government is, with the exception of the street cars, the railroad station, and taxicabs, practised as generally as elsewhere.

In some places the practise of discrimination is carried farther. There are stores that will not accommodate coloured patrons when the service calls for some personal attention to the prospective buyer. In such places a coloured woman cannot buy a hat or cloak unless she consents to make the purchase without trying on the article. And so it goes, according as local sentiment is sensitive in the matter of race contacts.

In all these phases of the problem the thinking Negro saves himself the embarrassment and humiliation otherwise involved by staying away, except as a certain necessity may force him to encounter the discrimination. In travelling, especially by motor car, a Negro may occasionally be forced to go to a white restaurant for food. He has learned beforehand to say to the proprietor that he will carry the sandwiches out with him. As frequently it is necessary for him to wait until he reaches the home of an acquaintance or friend, for as yet there is not a sufficiently large transient population among Negroes to support restaurants and hotels exclusively for Negroes, with accommodations to which the more prosperous class of Negroes are accustomed in their own homes.

As to theatres, this same class of Negroes remain away. Many will depart from this rule when some very unusual

attraction, as some famous artist, appears. The theatres do not modify their practices, but in such cases these patrons feel that the gain in education and culture will, in the interests of general advancement, offset the loss in the humiliation and embarrassment incurred. Others again will not accept the conditions for any consideration.

In the stores discrimination tends more and more to decline as the Negro's advancing economic position makes him an increasingly desirable patron and as competition increases among white merchants. More and more this condition also stimulates enterprises among Negroes, among whom there has been a remarkable development in business along the lines where discrimination against Negroes is sharpest.

Discrimination at soda fountains has stimulated the growth of drug stores with Negro proprietors. Negro restaurants of a certain type flourish for the same cause, except perhaps where some enterprising Greek operates a restaurant with space on one side of the partition for Negroes and on the other side for whites. Every town of any size where segregation is practised has a moving-picture house for Negroes but not always operated by Negroes. The conditions of the trade will enable a white proprietor who already operates such a house for whites to operate a separate house for Negroes at far less expense than an independent Negro proprietor can operate.

Negro undertakers are especially favoured by discrimination. If it is in any way avoidable white undertakers generally will not handle the bodies of Negroes. They go even farther than this under the pressure of prejudice. It was the ambulance corps from a white undertaking establishment that in one city left a Negro railroad worker to bleed to death rather than carry him in the ambulance used for the accommodation of white patrons. It should be said, however, that the newspapers of that city condemned this action in unsparing terms. This too in the same city where a Negro at the risk of his own life saved some thirty-four white passengers from a sunken river steamer. In another city an undertaking establishment refused the use of its most modern and best-equipped ambulance at any price to transport a patient who had been critically injured in an automobile wreck. But in general such discrimination works to the economic advantage of the Negro establishment.

Lines of business in which discrimination is not general do not prosper so well among Negroes because of the difficulty of meeting the competition of whites. Shoe stores, grocery stores, and millinery shops are a notable hazard among coloured people. Banks and insurance companies fare better because of the openings they make for coloured employees, at the same time giving as good service, a strong point in its appeal to the Negro's pride of race.

In all these matters the issue turns on the point of proximity. Certain white people resent the mere presence of a Negro on equal terms with themselves. The price of their patronage is the total exclusion of the Negro, and thus far the proprietors have found it worth while for one consideration or another to cater to this prejudice. It frequently happens that the proprietor or his representative will almost apologize to the Negro whom he confronts with some such regulation. He will be quick to give the assurance that it does not represent his personal attitude, that he himself has no prejudices; it is only because of public sentiment, he assures the customer, that he is maintaining the objectionable practice.

The problem here involved is the definition of the line where individual rights end and public privilege begins. It is not always easy to fix. There is a natural impulse among individuals to avoid indiscriminate personal contacts. It manifests itself strikingly in public carriers, where each passenger selects a separate seat in so far as this is possible, and only reluctantly sits with another. This obtains without regard to race; it is as general among coloured people in the sections where the races are separated as it is among whites where Negroes are rarely if ever seen. As a rule society respects this preference; but it also maintains that there are circumstances where it must be ignored. In general it yields to the principle that a privilege created by the joint contribution of many

individuals must be shared by all on equal terms. But race prejudices would dictate an exception as regards the Negro. Under the slave régime the propriety of this discrimination was unchallenged except as slavery itself was challenged. But the elimination of slavery, accomplished as it was by force, did not remove as promptly the customs and traditions still sacred to the section where slavery last obtained, and where the effort continues to maintain them under free institutions. Certain of these traditions Negroes would themselves respect as a matter of polite consideration to their holders; but even when so respected they do not concede the right either in law or courtesy to enforce their observance to the point of excluding Negroes from what should be the common privilege, or of subjecting the race to discriminations designed to mark a legal distinction that no longer obtains.

Mere separation of the races, as has been noted, is not always objectionable to Negroes and under certain circumstances may be preferable to both races; but its requirement in law and the assumption of superiority in station which it sooner or later inspires does and always will meet with an uncompromising protest from the Negro.

Chapter IX

THE NEGRO AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT

THE disabilities of the Negro in the law and the discriminations against him in the government are merely the reflections of a deeper and a stronger public sentiment which goes beyond the law and exceeds the government in making distinctions between black and white in our republic, to the advantage of the white and the disadvantage of the black. Even in those sections where the law and the government do not discriminate there is to be found in greater or less degree a sentiment that in actual practice discriminates between individuals on the ground of race and colour.

Even where the law forbids such discriminations, there is, of course, a point beyond which it cannot go in the control of personal preferences and idiosyncrasies. Even within the Negro race itself there are to be found among certain elements discriminations based on colour and sometimes on racial admixture. But the distinctions of this character which white people make as regards Negroes have added significance by reason of the wide prev-

alence of the practice and the implications which accompany it.

The medium by which white people most commonly express the distinction that they make between the two races is the name by which individuals of the race are designated. The word "nigger" as employed in the American vernacular embodies every shade of discrimination, from good-natured tolerance to despicable contempt.

With this one word public sentiment registers unmistakably its settled conviction that black people, that is to say people with any admixture of Negro blood, are not thought of in terms of equality on any plane with their fellow citizens of the white race.

It reflects the same sentiment that has coined the words "Sheenie" for the Jew; "Dago" for the Italian; "Frog" for the Frenchman; "Heinie" for the German; "Hunkie" for the Hungarian; "Chink" for the Chinese, and "Wop" for any of the European group whom the American cannot distinguish ethnologically.

The first lesson in race prejudice acquired by American children is in learning to say "nigger," and it is not long before the child senses that the implication is that all persons to whom this epithet is applied are beneath him in consideration and respect, as well as inherent worth. The thrust at the Negro's self-respect conveyed in this term is always keenly resented by every class of Negroes. It is true that many members of the race accept it with a

smile under certain circumstances, when they dare not openly disclose their resentment. It is furthermore true that certain elements of the race bandy this term lightly back and forth among themselves; but this does not confute the fact that all Negroes everywhere resent being called "nigger" by any white person under any circumstances.

And even when the term is used in badgering among themselves, it is intended to convey, good-naturedly, a certain contemptuous disregard for the other's estimate of himself. No one ever heard of any white man referring to his black mammy as a "nigger." It would be unthinkable; and Negroes themselves know of no more contemptuous epithet for a member of their own race than this same term "nigger."

They sometimes use it seriously, and then it is to register their unmitigated condemnation and disdain of the character to whom it is applied. It carries with it, as nothing else can, when so used, implications of utter unworthiness even to loathesomeness. If he dared—that is to say, if he were sure that the struggle would be limited to himself and his provocateur—every Negro so addressed would resent the insult with a blow. As it is there is many a fight between boys on this ground; and sometimes adults are so moved with resentment as to ignore all possibilities of combined attack and register their resentment with violence.

Only slightly less offensive are the terms "darky," "coon," and "shine," all of them expressions of contempt for the personality of those to whom they are applied. It is doubtless true that they are not deliberately used in this way by many who employ these terms, but they undoubtedly originated in such a mood and are unconsciously employed to give expression to the same mood whether in story-telling, good-natured raillery, or the general round of humour.

The Jews, the Irish, and other races have successfully banned such allusions to their own race from the press and from the stage. Negroes have the same feelings in the matter, though as yet they are powerless to do more in this direction than to appeal to the best instincts and the more delicate sensibilities of such of their white friends as indulge the practice, as a great many of them do.

Coloured people are often very much amused at the effort on the part of some of their white friends to give consideration to their wishes in this matter without at the same time appearing in the eyes of their own set to be straining for effect. In these circles the term "niggra" is used as a compromise between "nigger" and "Negro." They know plain "nigger" is offensive to the coloured people. They probably also feel that "Negro," with a long "e" and a long "o," smacks of the same pretention as the word "cawn't" in the mouth of one who all of his life has been saying "cān't." They save their faces by the

use of the compromise "niggra"; but they are not aware of the amused contempt that the effort inspires in their coloured audience, for it is before coloured audiences that this term "niggra" is employed.

It is a very interesting spectacle to observe an audience of coloured people "freeze up," so to speak, on a white speaker who is so ignorant of conditions or so far forgetful of himself as to use the term "nigger" in addressing them. However cordial the audience may have been up to that time in its response to his words, from that point on they close their ears and hearts utterly to all that he has to say. Did he but appreciate the situation such a speaker would immediately sit down.

Similarly, but not quite so objectionable to coloured people, is the use of the word "Negro" in type, with a small "n." It is particularly irritating when the printer in referring to race categories turns from the use of the capital letter in referring to what we in America call coloured people. The distinction is obvious to the most casual observer and is just one more sanction for the same discrimination in other lines.

There was a time when the coloured people of America were offended at the designation "Negro." It is probable that Booker Washington had more to do with its now almost universal acceptance as a designation for the race than any other individual. From among a variety of terms, no one of them generally acceptable, Dr. Wash-

ington urged his people to accept this very simple one and to give it distinction by the worth of their own character and efforts. His advice has been very largely followed.

The thinking Negro no longer finds opprobrium in the term, but he would insist that it be spelled with a capital "N" and not "n." Many newspapers and magazines, both North and South, have ungrudgingly accorded this consideration to the self-respect of the Negro. There are many that still do not. But the limit of contumely is reached in the use of the word "negress." In this more than in anything else is reflected the habit of mind persisting from the days of slavery that places the Negro in the category of "things," of goods and chattels, as when a planter in reckoning his property referred to his possessions in "negroes, hogs, cattle, mules, horses, etc."

There are not many newspapers that cling to this practice, but occasionally a few careless reporters feel compelled by the poverty of our speech to use this designation for the making of a striking headline. In all such practices Negroes discern a continuous propaganda for maintaining the superiority complex of the white man which in some quarters is deemed so essential for the maintenance of American civilization, and the inferiority complex in the Negro, without which he is regarded as a menace to the ascendency of the white man and the permanence of his institutions.

Of all forms of discrimination that which employs cold type is the most subtle and far reaching. As long as it persists race prejudice will survive. From this as a starting point anything else is possible and everything else is logical. It is to be expected that those persons who find it impossible to give the same consideration in cold type to Negroes which they give to people of other races will find it no more easy to give them the same consideration in personal contacts and in the accepted amenities of our order of civilization; for which reason these same people simply refuse to refer to or address any Negro man or woman as "Mr." or "Mrs." or "Miss," regardless of any legal significance in those terms, especially the title "Mrs."

The habit of slavery days was to address the slave by a given name—few of them had any other. If any distinction was to be made between slaves of the same given name on different plantations, the master's name was employed in the possessive as "Thompson's John" or "Hightower's Jim." With advancing years, if endowed with sufficient personal dignity and other elements of character, that individual became "Uncle Jim," and in the case of women "Aunt Harriet," instead of simply "Harriet."

When the slave became a free man, many of them simply adopted the names of their former masters, but in the order characteristic of a free man; and so he styled himself John Thompson or James Hightower. With it also

they adopted the titles of Western democracy "Mr.," "Mrs.," and "Miss." There are many who regard this as a presumption, but in the mind of the Negro it registers not only his respect for himself but his respect also for both men and women in his own race—a distinct gain over the lack of respect characteristic of the status of a slave.

In the establishing of a free society the foundation of morals lies with this building up of respect for the personality of both men and women. Outside the family and the circle of intimate friendship the lack of it is regarded as a serious menace to moral and social integrity. Among men the default in the observance of this democratic custom ordinarily passes without remark. Servants, of course, expect it, although menservants would much prefer the use of their surnames rather than their given names. Womenservants in America would hardly ever be reconciled to the English custom of being addressed by their surnames. Where some consideration is to be shown the position of public distinction of an individual Negro recourse is had to the titles "Professor" or "Doctor." In the case of women no such compromise is possible. The results are rather curious.

News editors with such scruples, when they receive copy referring to coloured women as "Mrs. Jane Smith" or "Mrs. John Smith," either delete "Mrs." entirely or refer to the individual as the wife or widow of John

Smith, or Professor Smith, as the case may be. When Mrs. Booker T. Washington died in June of 1925, newspapers of this class referred to her simply as the widow of Booker T. Washington. Some of them referred to her as a "Noted Negress." When occasionally the fact that the woman referred to is of the Negro race escapes the attention of the proof reader, and her name appears as Mrs. John Smith, coloured people regard it usually as a joke on the editor. The situation, however, becomes more serious when it is a matter of direct address.

Coloured school teachers have long complained of the practice common among school officials of addressing them by their given names as "Mary" or "Johnella," both in private and in the presence of their scholars. They object strenuously to the practice because the use of the given name by other than the family circle and immediate friends is everywhere regarded as an unwarranted assumption of familiarity and frequently of intimacy, and because, in the face of prevailing conditions, it tends to lower the teacher from the position of dignity which is rightly hers in her classroom, and in the respect which these children are everywhere taught that they should have for their elders and others in authority.

Here we have an instance of the conflict of standards as between the two races whose consequences are rather serious in the social life of the Negro. The coloured people on the one hand are teaching their children both

self-respect and respect for others; on the other hand, the prevailing practice among whites is a declaration to these children that no Negro man or woman is entitled to such respect. In such a dilemma the coloured people refuse to give up their standards.

This practice is not confined to public officials. The Negro minister who purchases a railroad ticket with a clergy permit has long since grown accustomed to the salutation, "Well, old man, where are you going?"

It happened in New York City that the late Dr. Washington, probably the most distinguished Negro in the world, and by general consent one of the most distinguished men of his time, stopped on the sidewalk to conclude a conversation with two other Negroes holding positions of responsibility and some distinction, one of them Mr. Charles W. Anderson, then Collector of Internal Revenue in New York City, the largest and richest district in the revenue service. All of these men were past middle life and, in personal appearance, unmistakably above the average. Suddenly they were interrupted by a young white man in his early twenties with the words: "Say, can any of you boys tell me where Edgecombe Avenue is?" He was surprised when he did not get an answer. Similar experiences could be related by most Negroes.

Something of the same sort happened to the Hon. John H. Smythe, formerly United States Minister to Liberia

and at that time the head of a state institution in Virginia. On one occasion he had a conference, by invitation, with the Governor of the State, which lasted some time. As he was leaving the Capitol two white men drove up in a buggy, and seeing a Negro crossing the sidewalk, hailed him with the remark, "Here, old man, hold this horse for a few minutes," and proceeded into the building, also for a conference with the Governor. Returning a few minutes later in company with the Governor, the latter was astonished to see his previous visitor holding a horse for his two companions. Taking in the situation at a glance, with sly humour he proceeded to present their impromptu servant to these men, much to their evident embarrassment; and ever afterward he gathered much amusement at their expense in relating the incident.

"Uncle" and "Auntie" are by no means as frequently used as they once were, perhaps because of the embarrassment to the speaker by the question in reply: "Just how am I related to you?" The word "boy" is used indiscriminately for males of all ages; and, of course, "George" for Pullman porters, waiters, and bell-boys is so common as to have wrung a protest from the innumerable private citizens of the white race, some of more or less distinction, whose parents very innocently blessed them with that same name.

More often, however, no term of address whatever is used. Conversation is introduced with common saluta-

tions about the day or one's state of health, and individuals are addressed in the second person. When packages are to be delivered or accounts entered, in the case of women, either they will use their husbands' names or, in self-defense, particularly if unmarried, they will give their surnames with their initials only. Under such circumstances they scrupulously avoid repeating their own given names lest clerks, agents, and others should have the affrontery so to address them.

Now all of this sensitiveness in the matter of titles obtains particularly in those sections of the country and with those people among whom old baronial traditions survive: there the title "Mr." and "Mrs." and "Miss" indicate a social distinction that does not obtain in a democracy. The people who adhere to the old practice make no other defense than that it appears ridiculous to them to address a coloured man as "Mr." or a coloured woman as "Miss." It accords them in their estimate a consideration out of all proportion to their social position in life or their personal merits. A distinguished Episcopal clergyman, a friend of mine and by everyone recognized as a friend of the race, used to say that he always felt like laughing whenever he heard the principal of Hampton Institute, where he was a frequent visitor, refer to a coloured man as "Mr." To him, he said, it sounded just like saying "Mr. Mule": it seemed no less ridiculous.

On the other hand, those who have found their way

clear to use these titles declare that after the first few efforts it is as easy and natural in their contacts with coloured people as with members of their own race; and moreover the title "Mrs." is a designation to which every married woman is entitled under the law. To most if not all married women marriage is a sacred and honourable relation in which they justly take pride. To refuse to recognize it as such is a blow at the very heart of the society toward which the practice is directed.

It is true that a great source of irritation would be removed from the contacts of the two races if this simple democratic practice should become universal. Since it already obtains among coloured people themselves, its general adoption by white people would hardly give rise to any presumption among Negroes. As a matter of fact, it wins a heightened respect from Negroes for all those white people who have the courage and consideration to practise it.

The same sentiment that discriminates against the Negro in name and address makes similar demands in the matter of labour and wages. The Negro was imported to America to do the hard, rough work for which the Indian was not amenable and for which the white man did not always have the stamina, especially in certain climates. That he was equal to the demands made upon him is attested not only in the economic development of the South both before and since his emancipation, but

also in the familiar phrase of the vernacular "he worked like a nigger" which is the counterpart of the more classic expression "he worked like a Trojan," both of them descriptive of the ultimate achievement in industriousness. Thus the drudgery fell to the lot of the Negro.

In due time, however, the owner of slaves discovered that the black man could become a skilled artisan, and on the larger plantations practically all the labour, both skilled and unskilled, was performed by Negroes. In many cases planters even hired out their slaves as journeymen, their wages going to their masters; or by more liberal arrangement the slave agreed to insure to his master a definite sum by way of income. All in excess thereof he could keep for himself. Out of this practice has developed doubtless the public sentiment that restricts Negroes as a class to certain definite lines of employment and in some sections definitely fixes their wages at less than the standards for whites. Mechanical trades, domestic and personal service are generally regarded as the avenues of employment appropriate to Negroes, but even in these lines there are to be found discriminations in some sections of the country.

Before the World War Negroes generally found it difficult and in many instances impossible to secure employment in the skilled trades in the North; whereas in the South there was much less of such discrimination, particularly in the building trades, where white and

black mechanics could be found working side by side on the same job. In the North the employment of a Negro on a job with whites was apt to be followed by a strike of all white workers. Since the war these restrictions have largely been lifted, though there are still avenues of expert skill in which Negroes experience great difficulty in receiving training. No Negro can serve an apprenticeship in electroplating and steel engraving. Trade unions as a rule do not countenance Negroes as apprentices in plumbing. For a long time Negroes were not admitted to machine shops either as apprentices or master mechanics.

On the other hand, for a long time certain lines of employment regarded as more or less menial were occupied entirely by Negroes. Domestic and personal service was their exclusive field until the flood of European immigration brought other groups whose nationality did not raise questions of social status. In one section of our country Negroes still have a practical monopoly on domestic service. In the same section, until the World War, they were practically the only farm hands also. Instances are known in which white families moving from the North and Middle West and settling on the farm lands of the South, because of the scarcity of labour, used the women and girls of their own families in gathering crops. They were promptly waited on by old residents of the community and told that it was a gross violation of all social

customs of the neighbourhood to have white women working in the field, and if they did not desist from the practice they would probably find it desirable to move elsewhere. This was before the World War and the exodus of Negro labour. Negroes no longer have a monopoly on practical farming.

Barbering and table service were similarly at one time the exclusive field of Negroes, but those days are gone. It is an interesting commentary on the situation that only recently an effort was made by municipal ordinance in one of the largest cities of the South to forbid Negro barbers from serving white patrons. Hotels make curious adjustments in this matter of personal service. Sometimes the three lines of personal service are variously differentiated. The service may be all white or all coloured; or the dining-room service all coloured and the kitchen service all white; the bell boys coloured and the chambermaids white; or any other of the several variations possible to such organization. North of the Mason and Dixon line you will see no coloured firemen on locomotives. South of that line nearly all the railroads employ large numbers of coloured firemen, even on the very latest types of locomotive. But a Negro fireman is never advanced to the grade of engineer. In the same way in the Pullman service Negroes are employed as porters and waiters but they are not advanced to the grade of steward or conductor, although there are sev-

eral thousand Negro porters who have sole charge of Pullman cars and perform all the functions of the steward or conductor.

Another side of the picture is the varying attitude of labour unions. In some places Negroes are readily admitted into unions—stevedores, brickmasons, carpenters, plasterers. This is more true of the South than it is of the North, but it varies according to locality. In West Virginia and Alabama Negroes have shared in the coal strikes along with white union miners. In Pennsylvania Negroes are not admitted to miners' unions. In the shipyards at Newport News, Virginia, Negroes share in practically every line of service along with white men. For a long time during the World War the record for riveting was held by a Negro in these yards. The shipbuilding company there has even subcontracted the building of certain parts of ships to coloured men who use coloured labour throughout.

The story is that when this industry was first started at Newport News white labourers came to Mr. Collis P. Huntington, the head of the company, protesting against the employment of coloured labour. Speaking to the representatives of the unions Mr. Huntington pointed out the window to the shipyards of the company and said, "If the contracts for those ships are not filled by a certain date I must forfeit several million dollars; but I would rather forfeit that whole amount than deprive

any reliable capable labourer, whatever his race or colour, of his chance to make an honest living." That effectively solved the problem of discrimination in this particular industry at Newport News.

One subtle and serious result of this condition is that Negro youths are deprived of many of the incentives that stimulate ambition. There is comparatively little in American industry which spurs the Negro to do his best. In the majority of places where Negroes serve, there is no such thing as "beginning at the bottom and working to the top." A porter or messenger in a bank has little or no prospect of being anything more than a porter or messenger to the end of his days.

There is a very popular monthly magazine that makes a specialty of the stories of men who began their careers as office boys or section hands and worked their way on merit pure and simple to the head of the concern. Negro boys and girls must translate such stories to suit their particular condition. However competent, however diligent the Negro who works for the average white corporation, he very soon finds himself at the limit of advancement, because of the accident of race or colour, where he must stand and watch others no more capable and no more deserving rise to positions of responsibility and affluence from which he is inexorably excluded.

This condition of affairs has a particularly marked influence on the educational ambitions of Negro youth.

Reference is made again to the fact that in Northern communities, where Negroes very often have exceptional educational advantages, the number of coloured youths graduating from the high schools is remarkably small and out of all proportion to the Negro's percentage of school population. A contributing factor in his situation is the fact that there are relatively few opportunities for Negro youth to win the prizes in life that education gives to white people. By a subconscious reasoning many of these young people conclude that it is not worth the time and the effort to strive for an education from the normal rewards of which they are deliberately excluded.

It is not surprising that discrimination in employment should be accompanied by discrimination in pay. Where Negroes are members of labour unions they are generally safeguarded against it; but only a small fraction of those who are gainfully employed have this advantage. Discrimination is most apparent among school teachers, where, of course, it is easiest to make comparisons. It is a deliberate policy, frankly stated in some sections of the country, to make the salaries of Negro teachers less than the salaries of white teachers of the same grade and qualifications. Where the average annual salary of Negro teachers is $550, that for white teachers will be $1,250. For all that a Negro porter of a passenger train crew may do the work of porter, brakeman, and flagman, while sometimes assisting the conductor with his duties, his pay

is never more than that of a porter. However high may be the wages of a white employee under these conditions, popular sentiment insists that a Negro engaged in similar service shall not receive as much as a white man.

In the professions, of course, no such discrimination can obtain. Here there exists for the most part an open field where merit wins its reward without artificial handicaps. In all sections of the country there are physicians, dentists, and sometimes even lawyers whose clientele includes individuals of both races. Nevertheless, there have been instances where threats of violence have been made against Negro physicians and dentists in the attempt to force them to limit their practice to people of their own race. In one city the movement went so far as to compel dentists and physicians to put the word "coloured" along with their names on their office signs.

In art the same practice prevails, though by long and persistent efforts such prejudices are being overcome. There have been a few Negroes of genius who have risen to great heights in their chosen field with a corresponding share of material rewards; but even these careers have not been wholly devoid of the embarrassments of discrimination. It is generally conceded that the late Bert Williams was the greatest comedian that the American stage has produced, as he was also the highest paid artist of his class; but he also possessed undoubted gifts for drama and tragedy, and it was his persistent lament that public sen-

timent in America would not permit him to appear in any other rôle than that of a black-face comedian.

With one or two remarkable exceptions the American public does not want to hear a Negro singer in anything other than plantation melodies. The man who in foreign countries is recognized as the greatest living American painter, Mr. Henry O. Tanner, son of the late Bishop Henry M. Tanner of the A. M. E. Church, is hardly known outside of professional circles in his native country; and yet it is his privilege to exhibit *hors concours* in the annual Salon in Paris. But the exceptions referred to are happy indications that, except for the restrictions of law, it would be ultimately possible to remove the more discouraging handicaps of this character.

In response to this same sentiment even "impartial" history is coloured by the same discrimination whether it be ancient or modern or current. School children in America learn very early about the great Hannibal of Carthage, but nobody breathes that he was just as much a Negro as are, to be conservative, at least one fifth of the Negroes of America. Reams of paper have been used to disprove any connection of the Negro with the glories of ancient civilization, in spite of the very obvious negroid characteristics of the Sphinx and other personages well known to archæologists. It is carefully concealed that highly creditable records associate the names of Pushkin, Dumas, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and even our own

Alexander Hamilton with the Negro race. Crispus Attucks, the first martyr of the Revolution; Phyllis Wheatley, the most distinguished poet of the time of George Washington; Benjamin Banneker, the first American to make a calendar; Jan Matziliger, whose invention revolutionized the shoemaking industry of America and laid the foundation for its present supremacy over all the rest of the world; Toussaint l'Ouverture, who virtually drove France out of the Western Hemisphere, are tacitly ignored in the record of the white man's history because they are unmistakably and indisputably of Negro origin.

In the daily record of events there seems to be a sacred taboo against the mention of the black man's part in the passing ensemble, to say nothing of the embargo put upon his participation in it. What a furor was created when Commander Peary insisted on taking a black man as his sole companion in his final conquest of the Pole, even though Matthew Henson was, in the Commander's judgment, far and away the best qualified man in the world to assist him in his hazardous undertaking! How little his name figured in the story or in the celebration of the subsequent conquest by aëroplane!

The day will come, of course, when names will be mentioned in the press and in history without regard to racial identity, but so long as public opinion regards the Negro as inferior it would be only fair to credit the race with whatever merit it has achieved. It may be surpris-

ing, but it is true, that even in the matter of mere numbers the same discriminations follow the race. According to our latest census the birth rate in the Negro population for the preceding decade has dropped below that immediately before. Figures may not lie, but instances are well authenticated in which enumerators in districts where the population was preponderantly coloured, the distances great and the homes difficult to reach, were satisfied to arrive at an approximation by guessing at the total population and supplying the details by casual inquiry and from their own imagination. In an earlier census by the same process a Negro bishop, well educated, a man of culture and refinement, was recorded in the census report as a whitewasher and kalsominer; all of which discloses how persistent is the discount which public opinion places upon the Negro in all his contacts with American life.

But upon no group within the Negro race do the discriminations of public sentiment react with more of hardship and injustice than upon Negro women. Notwithstanding the claims of chivalry, woman in her best estate has borne the brunt of male selfishness and inconsistency; but the Negro woman, in addition to the lot imposed upon her sex by age-long tradition, labours under conditions peculiar to herself. She still lives within the shadow of the time when to some her body was not her own but the property of her master, to be used according

to his pleasure; and even now she moves in an atmosphere in which stigma attaches itself but lightly to that element of another race, who think of her attractions as the natural satisfaction of their overflowing desires.

Here we touch a delicate subject, involving the strongest feelings of both races, but it would be unfair to the thinking Negro to pass over entirely a subject of such vital interest and upon which he has such strong sentiments, as well as disloyal to the women of the race who have suffered so long and so much and have carried the odium of the situation with so little of understanding or sympathy.

The time is not yet ripe for any detailed discussion of the subject. Feelings are too strong on both sides of the question to admit of any public revelation of the ramifications of this phase of the relations between the two races; but it is conceded to lie at the bottom of practically all those complications which we call "the Negro problem." In the last analysis it is the social aspects of contact between the races that present the gravest obstacles to a fair and satisfactory adjustment, and it is the Negro woman who more than anyone else is the victim of its inequalities and injustices.

As things stand to-day in most places she is virtually without protection, either in the law or in public sentiment. Seldom does one hear of a white man being arrested on the complaint of a Negro woman for annoying her.

Should she make complaint to an officer of the law it is more likely that she, herself, would be arrested. Should a Negro man attempt to resent the impertinences of a white man addressed to his wife, or mother, or sister, as every Negro knows, a race riot would very likely ensue. It is not so very long since an old Negro of more than seventy years was lynched by a mob for protecting his granddaughters from the assaults of two drunken white men who pursued their intended victims to the very door of their home, where the girls were saved from outrage by their grandfather's shooting their pursuers, himself in turn to be killed by the mob for his effrontery in attacking white men.

The Negro woman suffers not only from the handicap of economic and social discriminations imposed upon the race as a whole, but is in addition the victim of unfavourable legislation incorporated in the marriage laws of twenty-nine states, which forbid the intermarriage of black and white. The disadvantage of these statutes lies, not as is generally represented, in the legal obstacle they present to social equality, but rather in the fact that such laws specifically deny to the Negro woman and her offspring that safeguard from abuse and exploitation with which the women of the white race are abundantly surrounded. On the other side, the effect of such legislation leaves the white man, who is so inclined, free of any responsibility attending his amatory excursions across the

colour line and leaves the coloured woman without redress for any of the consequences of her defencelessness; whereas white women have every protection, from fine and imprisonment under the law to enforced marriage and lynching outside the law.

Something of what the white woman herself thinks on this subject is reflected in the resolution adopted in 1920 at a meeting of the Women's Council of the M. E. Church South:

> We, a company of Southern white women assembled on the invitation of the Commission on Inter-racial Coöperation find ourselves with a deep sense of responsibility to the womanhood and childhood of the Negro race, and also with a great desire for a Christian settlement of the problems that overshadow the homes of both races.
>
> We acknowledge our responsibility for the Negro women and girls in our homes and on the streets.
>
> We are convinced that the establishment of a single standard of morals for men and women, both black and white, is necessary for the life safety of a nation. We, therefore, pledge ourselves to strive to secure respect and protection for womanhood everywhere regardless of race and colour.

Similar sentiments have been expressed by the women of North Carolina, Georgia, Texas, and other states.

This is but one aspect of the situation. Admittedly it is the most sensitive spot in race relations, and this holds true on both sides. Among whites it gives rise to lawlessness and mob violence which no appeal to reason seems able to check; among Negroes it is the occasion of a deep-seated resentment that only an age-old patience keeps in

restraint. It is the only remaining argument to uphold discrimination and segregation, as it was the chief argument that secured their adoption and gave countenance to their justification.

Here more than anywhere else the slave status of the Negro in America palpably persists. True, the Negro woman is protected against the sale of her person, but her only defence against the desire of designing white men is the strength of her own will and the integrity of her own soul, and against these every conceivable assault has been made; but in spite of this she moves resolutely forward in the building up of home, the training and development of her children, and other lines of service that make for the advancement of her race. One wonders which is the more to be pitied, these helpless women who fight against desperate odds for the maintenance of honour and home, or the society that subsists under a dual code that palsies honour when it removes the fear of retribution.

At the bottom of this state of affairs with respect to Negro womanhood lies a principle of much wider extension in the relations of the two races in this country. That principle is the maintenance of lower standards for Negroes than for whites. In some instances this is the expression of a supposed benevolent charity toward the Negro. Again it is the result of a total misapprehension of the standards that Negroes have erected for themselves. There is a widespread tendency in every part of the country to

underestimate the Negro's capacity as well as his ideals. Some years ago the students in several of the best colleges for Negroes, whose faculties were almost entirely white and themselves graduates of some of the best colleges in our country, felt it necessary to protest to their teachers that in classroom work and in examinations they wanted to be judged by the same academic standards that applied in the institutions where these teachers themselves had studied. They sensed daily that their teachers were, as they supposed themselves, benevolently condescending to the limitations of Negro mentality in the handling of the subjects of study, and these young people were unwilling to accept any such humiliating concession.

As observed elsewhere, discrimination in salaries between white and coloured teachers is justified by those responsible on the assumption that the standards of living among Negroes are in general lower than the standards among whites. As a matter of fact, very few white people are acquainted with the standards of living and achievement that obtain among aspiring Negroes. Really ludicrous in the eyes of Negroes was the action of the officials of a certain white Y. M. C. A. Committee in selecting the Negro janitor of their own building to be the executive secretary of the coloured branch in the same town. Of course, he was the one Negro whom they knew best, as well as the best one that they knew.

Perhaps no one incident in the contacts of the two

races is more surprising and more educative to the average white man than to discover a Negro physician, or lawyer, or scientist, or artist of skill or proficiency equal to that of a white man. There are two phrases current in the language into which this sentiment has crystallized—one that a certain accomplishment is "very good for coloured people," and the other that a given thing is "good enough for a Negro." Against all such condescension the spirit of the Negro rebels. In no phase of American life are the standards too high for his aspiration, and he has immeasurable satisfaction in doing things as well as or better than a white man—this because of the generally implied and often expressed sentiment, which is at the same time quite widespread, that a Negro, just because he is a Negro, cannot attain to the standards of what is called white civilization. Given the chance, he feels that to do so is a vindication of his race and its claim to essential equality with all other races.

Few outside the race realize what a stimulus it is after all to the Negro to be constantly subjected to comparison with the white man. It has had more to do, perhaps, with the remarkable advancement of the race in America than most of those within or without the race are conscious of. In this direction there is significance in the fact that along lines of general advancement the progress of the Negro in America has been most rapid in those parts of the country where discrimination has been most general

and the comparisons between the races often most disparaging.

It is certain that such comparisons are not intended to be stimulating. One suspects that the intention is just the reverse; for certainly it is commonly accompanied by the feeling that it is presumptuous on the part of the Negro to aspire to the standards of the white man. In many places this sentiment found striking manifestation with the advent of the automobile. More than once did it occur in the early days of the automobile that Negroes driving their own cars were dragged out and whipped, and their cars wrecked, for their imputed arrogance and impertinence in presuming to enjoy privileges to which whites alone were entitled. It is only since the war that in a certain city, whose name has recently become famous for other reasons, that a Negro could drive a car even as chauffeur for its white owner. Chauffeurs coming into that city with visiting tourists have been driven out of town with a warning never to return. In that same city to-day a Negro cannot get gas at a filling station patronized by whites.

Many of my readers will find it hard to believe that in Miami, Florida, the writer saw with his own eyes a crowd of white men chase a Negro through a restaurant in which the observer was eating at the time, the Negro finally eluding his pursuers by going through the rear door and vaulting the fence in the back yard, and for

no other offense than that of driving a car, which was even then occupied by its white owner and his friends.

To many such people Negroes in evening clothes appear ridiculous except in the capacity of dining-room waiters or actors on the stage. Much the same spirit it was that prompted the stripping of his clothes from a Negro soldier in another city who was wearing his uniform as a commissioned officer of the United States Army. It is reflected even in such a little thing as this, that in the railroad stations of some cities signs may be seen over rest rooms for female patrons reading "white ladies" on one side of the room, and on the other side "coloured women," as though it were preposterous to think of coloured women as "ladies." Although the stilted expression is happily passing out of usage, most people, black as well as white, regard the term "woman" as the stronger of the two, with a feeling that there is something meritricious in the word "ladies."

So in a hundred ways wholly outside and beyond the law public sentiment still sustains practices which not only put the Negro at a disadvantage but bring to bear on the individual Negro the whole weight of public opinion in the white race in a coercion more subtle but quite as effective as any produced by the law.

The entire practice gathers about it the suspicion that the aim on the part of those who indulge in it is to make the Negro think himself inferior; and in this they have

in some instances succeeded. There are many aged Negroes who share the sentiment of "their white folks" that Negroes who refer to themselves as "Mr." and "Mrs.", who pronounce their words with cultivated accents and have servants in their homes—that these people are "putting on airs." But the advancing Negro, that is, the very large and increasing number of Negroes who think, is judging himself and wants to be judged by the common American standards; and, where undeterred by the law, public sentiment is slowly but surely yielding before his insistence, however reluctant the consent. Even the casual observer can note the changes that are rapidly taking place. And the change is accelerated by his friends who in growing numbers are encouraged and cooperating with him in all of these laudable aspirations.

Chapter X

THE NEGRO'S REACTION

In the midst of all this the Negro thrives. Segregation, disfranchisement, prejudice, injustice, lawlessness—in spite of them all he prospers. Above it all his voice rises singing; and the note of his joy has become the symbol of our modern America. Whatever he hides in his heart, whatever he may think in the back of his head, he turns to the world a smiling face, and in spite of itself, the world, when it stops to look, is captivated by that smile; when it stops to listen, is thrilled by that song. And all the while he presses steadily onward, resolved to let nothing hold him down, to let nothing crush his spirit, to let nothing defeat his steadfast purpose of establishing his claim of equal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and demonstrating even to the most skeptical that essentially all men are created equal, determined to let no man, no movement drag him down so low as to make him hate his fellow men.

For beneath the smile and back of this song the Negro does take his situation very seriously, in spite of opinions

to the contrary. For all his mirth there is just a little melancholy in his smile; and all his song has a haunting strain of sadness in it. Catch him off his guard, and you will find him neither smiling nor singing, but thinking and thinking hard. At one time in his career when the Negro brooded over his wrongs he either grew sullen or cried. Out of these depths came the "spirituals," the "sorrow songs" of the race. He was a slave then, and there was little he could do but suffer and hope. To-day when the Negro meditates on the injustices that he meets from time to time, he often gets "mad." As before, he may reserve his demonstrations for the "big gate," but his protest is none the less genuine for all that; and pressed too far his wrath will sometimes explode on the spot, and at such times those who know him have the wisdom to let him alone.

Any Negro, every Negro burns with indignation when he pays full first-class fare for a railroad ticket and then has to ride in a crowded, odorous, flimsy, dirty second-class coach. There is no one word to describe the complex of his emotions when a Pullman ticket agent tells him he has no space, and he then, going around the corner and calling the agent over the 'phone, is told that there is plenty of space. Only the word "contempt" describes his emotional reaction when, after reading of a "black brute" done to death by a "quiet, orderly mob" accompanied by women and children, on the next day he reads of young

coloured girls ravaged by a member of one of the "best white families" who is later declared "insane"; and then recalls that a short while before a Negro already adjudged insane and confined in a state asylum for his malady is dragged out of his bed and lynched for the irresponsible killing of a white nurse.

Once in a long while feelings are outraged beyond control and some "devil-may-care," stung beyond endurance, throws his life into the certainly losing balance, turns on his tormentors, and scatters death in his trail until he is dropped in his own gore. And Negroes everywhere, of every class, stand in awe of the defiant spirit that burned itself out in a flaming protest, his quivering body an offering to the god of vengeance, while his agonizing soul, the soul of his people, cries out, "How long, O Lord, how long?"

But often, far more often, he smiles a slow, quaint, quizzical, sometimes skeptical, sometimes cynical, and always enigmatical smile, as when his "boss" tells him, after he has faithfully turned in his last ounce of cotton, "Well, George, you are just about even; but I can let you have some more on account"—the same thing every year; or when a white man quite inadvertently jostles him in a crowd and turns instinctively to make an apology only to cut it off short when he discovers it was "only a nigger," or when he reads the inscription on the corner stone of a Y. M. C. A. "for the love of Christ," and entering merely

to get some information is promptly informed, even before he can frame his question, "Negroes are not allowed in here."

Once he was disgusted whenever a white man spoke volubly about his "black mammy," but now he is apt to laugh to himself. And if you tell him the South is the best place for the Negro and that the Southern white man is his best friend he looks to see whether you really expect him to believe it. But the outstanding joke is to hear a white man talk about race integrity, though at this the Negro is in doubt whether to laugh or swear. Sometimes it is all a huge joke to him, and his richest humour, indulged only in private, surrounds his musings on the average white man's pretensions of superiority, the inconsistencies in his application of standards, and the hypocrisy of his professions in the face of the undisguised, unabashed, and often unrestrained humanity of his natural impulses and desires.

But following quick upon his wrath and mingled with his humour there sweeps over him from time to time a wave of deep sympathy for the man who finds it necessary to resort to violence, oppression, injustice, and downright dishonesty to maintain a specious superiority that otherwise could not stand on its own legs. To the Negro it is touching to see a poor ignorant, shiftless, ragged, sallow "sager" spew out a mouthful of tobacco juice and with great condescension aver: "Wal, I ain't got nothin'

agin the niggers; why don't you know I was fo'teen year old afore I knowed I was any better than a niggah!" To that same "nigger" it is nothing less than pathetic to see how, in fear of his advance, some white people have allowed their pride, their prejudice, and their bigotry to dwarf all their finer instincts, their loftier ambitions, their noblest impulses, and keep them discontented, sour, hopeless, and vindictive.

In his forgiving moods the Negro actually pities the condition of the man who cannot, and who dare not even, recognize skill and talent, honour and virtue, strength and goodness simply because it wears a black skin. And there is a real pang in his heart when the cordial, guileless contacts of childhood and youth must give place to the studied reserve, the calculated condescension, and the deliberate ignoring that sophisticated maturity demands. Contrariwise and to the same degree there is pride in and the greatest respect for that white man wherever he is, and of whom there is to-day a large and increasing number, who is big enough to rise above the paralyzing miasma of hostile public sentiment and by justice, fair dealing, honour, courtesy, and consideration, demonstrate an inherent superiority of mind and character that is its own exaltation and commands the instinctive respect and deference of every class and condition. He is proud because every such white man is a living refutation of the oft-repeated assertion that there is a natural antagonism be-

tween the white man and the black man, and a demonstration that strength of character and even superiority are not inconsistent with an attitude of fairness and good will toward the black man. Every such white man gives the Negro a little more faith in the white race generally, and at the same time enables him to endure the opposite type with more of patience and even to regard him with a certain kind of pity.

Ordinarily the Negro relieves his feelings either with music or mirth; with either he will choke off his resentment and salve his wounds; but more and more he is developing the practice of talking about his experiences. Seldom does a group of Negroes assemble but sooner or later the subject of the white man's attitude toward the Negro comes up as a topic of conversation, or it may be alluded to in the course of public address. Of course, it is impossible for the Negro to escape these unpleasant experiences unless he stays at home or lives in a community where there are no white people: the first is practically impossible and the second almost as much so. Altogether there are about twenty or thirty exclusively Negro communities in the United States, but even these are not completely self-sustaining, and there must be some contact with some white people. It would be interesting as well as revealing if white people of this class could hear the varied comments that coloured people make concerning their conduct and attitude toward the Negro race. It

would in many instances be surprising, and in some degree, perhaps, even somewhat humiliating. The only way to arrive at that knowledge, however, is to be a Negro, for it is still true and will be for a long time to come that the Negro does not tell any white man all that is in the back of his head. Few of us, indeed, have the courage to tell anybody all that we think about them, except under the greatest provocation, and then, like as not, we cannot find the words with which to do it.

Certain questions, however, constantly recur in the course of those conversations: one is, Why should the white man with numbers, the government, the courts, the police power, economic control, and his generally superior advantages in life—why should the white man live in such constant dread of the Negro's having an equal opportunity in a struggle where the natural advantages are practically all on his side? What is he afraid of? They do not understand what it is about a black man that throws certain white people into a panic. Again they wonder at the nature of the superiority that must resort to oppression, injustice, discrimination, and sometimes downright dishonesty to maintain itself; they wonder what such a man does with his conscience when it comes to dealing with the Negro on such a basis. Pretty generally, of course, they have concluded that this type of man doesn't have any religion—that is, of the kind that

is set forth in the Bible, and in the New Testament particularly. But then it appears that the argument that works best with this type man is not the moral appeal but the economic appeal. By and large, the Negro is not surprised at anything that men of this class may do for the sake of money.

But thinking more soberly, they also recognize that in practically every community there are some white people who are thoroughly fair and just toward the Negro, white people who not only have no prejudices where the Negro is concerned, but who are actually sympathetic toward him and stand ready to do anything in their power with promise of effectually improving their condition. Every Negro knows at least one such white man in his community. Sooner or later that man is known to all the Negroes of that community, and he becomes to the entire population of that section as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. What the Negro hopes for is the increase in number of such white people until their attitude and sentiments shall be the controlling factors in the relations between the two races throughout the country. For a great many years past it has seemed to Negroes that the dominating sentiment throughout our country has been the sentiment that is hostile to the Negro. It is still in control in many places, so that the "Negro problem" for the Negro himself is how to find his

way out and his way up in the face of hostility, without at the same time exciting the fears and apprehensions which are at the root of such antagonism.

The Negro's first measure in this direction is to have as little to do with such white people as possible. Somehow the idea has gone abroad that the Negro above everything else likes to associate with white people. Nothing is farther from the truth. The black man has suffered so much at the hands of the white man that, except as his economic needs demand it, he is far happier to be out of the presence of the white man than to be in it; and on those occasions when he must associate with them he is under a certain constraint of which he is glad to be relieved whenever the opportunity comes.

Perhaps this was never better evidenced than among the Negro soldiers who went to France. Everybody by this time knows the story of the Negro's welcome among the French. It was the one thing that made their service in the A. E. F. bearable. Of course, it was thought that in view of the hospitality of the land of "Equality, Liberty and Fraternity" the Negro soldiers would expatriate themselves and settle down in a country where, as many of them felt, justice was something more than an idea and liberty something more than a mockery. Even the French authorities felt that such would be the reaction of the Negro to their new freedom, and so exacted of the United States Government an agreement that all Negro soldiers

should be returned to America immediately after the close of the war. What actually happened was that the United States Government could not get the Negro soldiers out of France as rapidly as they wanted to come, and no soldiers who went overseas trod American shores with a greater thrill of happiness than those same black boys who went abroad to fight for a democracy that they did not know at home. They said they missed their own dusky maidens more than anything else in the world, and they were willing to share anything with them that the future might hold in store.

It sometimes happens that an individual white person may appear at a social gathering of Negroes. Of course, such a person is received with every courtesy, but the full enjoyment of the evening is not reached until the stranger has departed. Not that anything else will transpire that has not already occurred, but there is a reserve which Negroes maintain in the presence of white people, partly to refute the charge that they are seeking so-called "social equality" and partly a dignity that refuses to be made a spectacle to the curious.

It should not be understood that the Negro finds it necessarily embarrassing or disconcerting to associate freely with white people; but it is to say that the Negro is keenly alive to the slightest intimation that his company is not desired, or even that his presence is not welcomed, and he is too proud and too self-respecting to re-

main on such conditions where the obvious passport is the acceptability of one's person. Indeed, this pride and self-respect will carry him even farther, so that he will voluntarily absent himself from a gathering to which he has obvious right of admission on other than personal grounds rather than even appear to be seeking contacts with any to whom he may not be thus personally acceptable.

The more obvious manifestation of this spirit of independence and self-respect on the part of the Negro is the rise of the Negro Church. More than one hundred and twenty-five years ago free Negroes organized Methodist and Baptist churches as distinctly Negro congregations, and even the slaves found it more acceptable to worship alone under a brush arbour than to occupy the gallery in their master's church and receive the communion cup after their white brethren.

The rise of the Negro school is due to the same impulse. Attention has already been called to the fact that in sections of the country where there are no separate schools for Negroes there is found to be a great falling off in the enrollment of Negro pupils as the age of self-consciousness brings with it also the embarrassments and humiliations that grow out of race discrimination. The average Negro youth cannot endure the slights imposed upon him in these mixed groups, and parents find it impossible to urge upon their children a situation that does violence

to their innate self-respect. A large factor in the development of business enterprises among Negroes is the desire within the race to avoid as far as possible the annoyance and unpleasantness so frequently involved in contact with a certain element of white people. It plays a very large part in the development of activities of professional life among Negroes.

In those matters of race relations which the law does not assume to regulate, in which, too, the Negro has undoubted rights, the great mass of Negroes will voluntarily surrender their privileges rather than suffer the embarrassment and humiliation which attend their exercise. Other things being equal, the Negro prefers to retain his self-esteem in a restricted sphere rather than accept a larger freedom of movement under the implication of being tolerated. So widespread is this feeling that it is very difficult to get Negroes in any numbers to accept even specific invitations from white people to join them in mixed gatherings. Far more than the average white man thinks, the Negro is quite content to establish his own line of voluntary separation of the races. If the truth were known it would be discovered that there is far greater tendency on the part of white people to seek the association of Negroes than there is on the part of Negroes to seek the association of whites. Race consciousness in the Negro is certainly as deep and perhaps deeper than in the white man. Instead, however, of taking the form of

antagonism to other races it acts as a tremendous stimulus to his pride. This may sound strange to those accustomed to think that the Negro is ashamed of his race. That is not true of the Negro anywhere, and travellers tell us that the last word in kingly dignity is your native African monarch unspoiled by contact with white civilization. What many people take for shame in the Negro is simply his confusion and embarrassment by circumstances to which he is subjected because of his race.

A certain propaganda has pretty well succeeded in putting the stigma of inferiority on most things associated with the race—colour, hair, speech are the obvious marks of Negro origin. Their presence is to the average white man the indication that here is a man who may be discriminated against with impunity; that the ordinary rules of courtesy and consideration, the ordinary laws of justice and fair dealing, the ordinary considerations of deference and respect need not be applied here; all these may be waived with impunity according to the whim and fancy of the beholder. It is to escape just such discrimination that the Negro, whenever he does it, resorts to one means or another of concealing his racial identity; and, where that cannot be wholly done, to mitigate by other means in some degree the beholder's contempt for his person.

Thus Negroes who cannot be distinguished from white people will ofttimes "pass" (for white) as occasion may

warrant: not that they want to be known as white people or that they want to associate with white people as such, but because they do not want to be discriminated against as they will be if they are known to belong to the Negro race. Thus under the protection of their white skin they can enjoy the comforts of travel and residence, can avail themselves of public service obtained at a price, and indulge their tastes in public entertainments and diversions without obtruding themselves upon the privacy of other individuals or interfering with their enjoyment of the same things, while at the same time they avoid for themselves what are wholly unnecessary and altogether unreasonable slights and discriminations. In this way they move about with perfect freedom, giving no offense to others and not being offended. There are other members of the race, whose identity is unmistakable, who nevertheless frequently do what they can, not to "pass," but to tone down the marks of distinction so as to diminish the contrast between themselves and the dominant whites, and so present less of a target, as it were, for discrimination and, as like as not, slights and epithets, along with shafts of ridicule.

Hair straightening, face bleaching, are all a part of this defensive armour. In fact, the Negro's pride of race takes the form of what at times amounts almost to an obsession to do things like the white man. So persistently has it been argued, and so effectively also, that the Negro's natural

differences from the white man are the evidence of his inferiority that he is almost pathetically anxious on occasion to appear and conduct himself as the white man in order to demonstrate that in spite of these differences he is endowed with the same capacities as his paler brother.

It is an impulse of this character that gives an inspiration to Negro life that possibly no other people in America have. The Negro feels that he is in the public eye, that he is being observed and criticized and constantly measured by white standards, that this ultimate unrestricted acceptance as a part of the great American family depends upon his success in meeting these standards, so that when one member of the race is deliberately or by accident thrown into a position of comparison with the members of other races, his emergence with a judgment either of equality, or superiority even, is a source of great satisfaction to the entire race. The news of it, though it may be kept out of the white papers, is promptly broadcast by Negro newspapers to every household, and the race has a new access of pride and a new determination to vindicate itself.

Of course, the Negro is not the only man to adopt a defense armour against American prejudices. The German, the Jew, the Russian, and even the Irish resort to similar tactics in order to escape discrimination. In these latter cases, however, the process is much more simple: they have only to change their names, and this accom-

plished they become, for all practical purposes, full-fledged Americans with all the freedom and all the privileges that America accords to a white skin. The reading public will recall how one of the oldest families in America was thrown into consternation not so long ago when an alien family wanted to change its patronymic from "Kabotsky" to "Cabot." As it happens the Negro is already in possession of the typical American family names, so that it is sometimes necessary to mark them with a star to distinguish the bearer as coloured, as in the city directory, or definitely to state race and colour, as is almost universally required to-day on application blanks.

But the colour of the skin and the texture of the hair are not so easily modified. The most they can do in this direction, therefore, is to make the contrast as inconspicuous as possible. That the Negro is not actually desirous of being white or of being considered white is evidenced by the fact that relatively few indeed of those members of the race who could under no circumstances be identified by physical marks with the Negro race ever take advantage of this fact to cut off entirely from their people. It ofttimes happens that they find employment under the assumption that they are white, but beyond their working hours their association is entirely with the Negro race. Some of them who live this double rôle testify

that they find it very irksome indeed, and some give it up entirely.

On the other hand, persons of this type often find it tremendously embarrassing to be mistaken for white when they have no desire for such identity. Women find it more embarrassing than men to be asked to move from the section reserved for coloured people to the section for whites. Of course, the possibilities of error in this direction are limitless, sometimes with serious results when the error is in the opposite direction. Some railroads in the past have been compelled to pay heavy damages to white passengers because of the error of conductors in determining a passenger's racial identity. This confusion was finally avoided by making it obligatory on the part of the passenger to declare his race on being questioned; but, other things being equal, the Negro, however fair of skin, in the vast majority of cases is fundamentally satisfied with his race and associations. It is entirely because the American white man has made it a handicap or a reproach not only to be black but to be in any way identified with the Negro race that Negroes, in seeking to avoid this handicap, have sometimes been made to appear to be ashamed of their race and colour. On the other hand, whenever the odium of inferiority has been removed from the things characteristic of the race the Negro is proud not only of the achievements of his own people but of the things that distinguish them from other races.

In the beginning, when Negro spirituals were first brought to the notice of the public there were many in the race who protested that these songs ought to be forgotten because of their association in the minds of others with the Negro's history and status as a slave and their frequent burlesque in minstrel shows. But when after a time this music was acclaimed by competent critics as equal in beauty and power to any other folk music that has been produced the race began to sing them with a zest and abandon that had been previously known only amid the scenes of their origin. Negro composers are now vying with each other in developing them to their utmost possibilities, and white artists use them without apology to grace their programmes.

Now that subtle gestures and lithesome grace are not discounted under a dark skin Negroes are both happy and proud to have their own theatrical shows with their characteristic music, dances, and humour; from all of which it would appear that so long as a certain type of white man insists that to be a Negro is necessarily to be inferior, he is in effect putting pressure on the Negro to do everything in his power to be as much like the white man as possible. But when it is conceded that virtue and excellence may attach also to that which is black, then the Negro's pride will assert itself in his endeavours to develop his own peculiar gifts and capacities.

Such reactions as have been described thus far are in-

stinctive within the race. Nobody has taught the Negro to resent the white man's contempt. No one has suggested to him his estimate of the white man's inconsistency. These are only products of the continual impact of his sensibilities on the unpleasant side of race relations. Other races under similar circumstances react in very much the same way, albeit in many instances with more violence and bitterness; but more and more the Negro is resolved that things shall not remain this way. His patience is not brutishness; his meekness is not stupidity; his mirth and song are not superficiality, and no one accuses him of being a fool.

There is throughout the race a steadfast determination to change both himself and his environment and to win for himself the enjoyment of those opportunities and privileges in America which are accorded ungrudgingly to others who have done far less than he to make it possible. From emancipation onward there has been within the race a body of leaders who urged their people, in season and out of season, to exert themselves to the utmost in overcoming the handicaps of ignorance and poverty and separation, which at some stage or other of their history have been the lot of all races of mankind. So thoroughly has this ambition been implanted within the race that the strongest appeal to activity among them is this vision and interpretation of the significance of their endeavours in lessening the disadvantages and re-

moving the handicaps which the whole race suffers in its present condition.

Almost everything is looked at by Negroes from this angle, from the way in which they dress their children's hair to the manner in which migrants from the South appear and conduct themselves on the streets of Northern cities. When a Negro rises to address an audience of white people he has a consciousness that his whole race is being judged by the way he acquits himself on the platform. Perhaps the most critical point of all is reached when the Negro engages in sports with white contestants. The wide publicity given to sporting events and all the elements of character and physical endowment that go to make the trained athlete—these unite to make an athletic contest in which there is a Negro also a test of the fitness of his race to share in the opportunities and privileges of our national life. Typical of this spirit is this letter written by a young Negro—a star on the football team of a Western college—and found among his effects after his death from injuries received accidentally in the game:

THE CURTIS HOTEL, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

October 5, 1923.

My thoughts just before the first real college game of my life:

The honour of my race, family and self are at stake. Everyone is expecting me to do big things. I will. My whole body and soul are to be thrown recklessly about the field to-morrow. Every time the ball is snapped, I will be trying to do more than my part. On all defensive plays, I must break through the opponent's line and stop the play in their territory.

Beware of mass interference. Fight low, with your eyes open and toward the play. Roll back the interference. Watch out for cross bucks and reverse end runs. Be on your toes every minute if you expect to make good.

(Signed) JACK.

It was to that spirit that his team and college mates afterward erected a monument, which as it proved was an equal tribute to their own fine Americanism.

Perhaps the greatest impetus to this effort on the part of the Negro race was given by the late Booker T. Washington. He founded a school, the now famous Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, but in his hands it was vastly more than the conventional educational institution. Under his guidance and direction it became in effect a great social agency for the uplift of an entire race, with activities, extending far beyond the campus into the rural districts as well as towns and cities, touching every phase of the life of his people. Directly and indirectly he was the instigator of a network of activities for the advancement of his people such as is to be found nowhere else in the world among retarded or unprivileged groups. The spirit and vision of this man are the common heritage of his people and will operate with increasing force for generations to come to move the Negro forward in the ways of modern civilization with a progressive force that no selfishness or bigotry can defeat.

While all this goes on there is an equal determination to see that existing handicaps are not made any heavier,

that the field of discrimination is not extended, and that local inconveniences are not in any way increased or strengthened. The Negro is determined to use every lawful means to prevent prejudice and discrimination from securing any further sanction in the law, and at the same time wherever possible and by the same means to remove such disabilities as already obtain. The Negro has faith in the Constitution and the courts. He believes deep down in his heart that the discrimination practised against him has no sanction in our constitutional law. He believes that all legislation of this character which has found its way upon the statute books of our several states is in violation of the expressed guarantees of the Constitution. As opportunity presents itself he looks forward to submitting all such questions to a tribunal uninfluenced by local tradition and popular sentiment.

With equal persistence he goes about making friends. The Negro has all along felt that no permanent advantage was to be gained in America by resorting to violence for the redress of his wrongs. The sporadic uprisings of the days of slavery such as the rebellion led by Nat Turner, the Negro slave, failed for the lack of any general support. The well-intentioned but abortive gesture for freedom made by John Brown proved for the moment to be nothing more than a gesture, however inspiring, for want of support from the very group whom it was intended most to help. It is a matter of record that Freder-

ick Douglass emphatically expressed to John Brown his disapproval of the undertaking.

In his calmest moments the Negro prefers to believe that after all the great body of American sentiment in all parts of the country is in sympathy with his aspirations and without prejudice against his race. As he sees it, his difficulties are attributable more to the activities of a vociferous minority that is still able to command the floor and give the semblance of a majority support to its unchallenged declarations.

Negroes themselves do not believe that a mob bent on lynching represents the characteristic sentiment of the whole community, though they still cannot reconcile the silent acquiescence of the majority with moral courage. Few are the individual white people who would, by any standard of right and justice, attempt to justify the prevailing practices that accompany segregation. It is this silent majority that the Negro wants to see awake into action and make its voice heard in the correction of abuses and in the establishment of justice and equity.

It cannot be said too often that the Negro is not looking for any special privileges, that he is not asking for any special legislation, nor is he seeking entrée into any man's private domain. He feels that it is a libel against his race to say that segregation and discrimination are necessary to protect the white man's civilization, the sanctity of his home, or the integrity of his race. He feels that

it is an unwarranted insult both to his person and to his character to establish that there is any place to which the public is admitted that will be defiled by the mere presence of a black man in the enjoyment of equal privileges with others. He maintains that prejudices of individuals that make for discrimination against his race should be properly regarded as purely private and personal without any title whatsoever to recognition and support by public authority.

At the bottom of his heart the Negro believes that he has capabilities of culture and character equal to that of any other race; he believes that his gifts and endowments are of equal worth to those of any other people; and even in the matter of the mingling of racial strains, however undesirable it might seem to be from a social point of view, he would never admit that his blood carries any taint of physiological, mental, or spiritual inferiority. However long it may take, therefore, through however many generations of social progress it may extend, the Negro expects ultimately to live in America with such freedom of movement, such equality of opportunity, and such measure of common respect for his person and personality as will leave him, even though distinguished in physical characteristics, without any lower status than that of the average American citizen.

Chapter XI

THE OUTLOOK

When America was first confronted with the problem of finding a new status for some four million black people recently released from slavery, social philosophers projected three varying lines of solution for the problem —deportation, extermination, or amalgamation. No one advocates any one of the three seriously now. In spite of the propaganda of Marcus Garvey, few American Negroes really want to go back to Africa, and it is very doubtful if the American white man, particularly the Southern white man, would willingly consent to have him go; and the European governments who control that vast continent we may be perfectly sure would not permit them to return in any considerable numbers.

On the other hand, the Negro absolutely refuses to die out in spite of poor housing and physical neglect and the further fact that his death rate still continues to be almost double that of native-born whites. He was expected to dwindle progressively in numbers until his final disappearance, but he is still here, and his numbers continue to increase.

As for amalgamation, very few expect it; still fewer want it; no one advocates it; and only a constantly diminishing minority practise it, and that surreptitiously. It is generally accepted on both sides of the colour line that it is best for the two races to remain ethnologically distinct. The dominating sentiment of America revolts not so much, it would appear, at the mere mingling of the two strains as at the social and spiritual implications associated in the popular mind with the intimate contact of black men and white women.

On the other hand, the Negro's self-respect has been aroused to the point where he will not permit himself to enter an alliance under implications of inferiority—implications that are provoked not only in the minds of white people, but of Negroes as well. Theoretically Negroes would all subscribe to the right of freedom of choice in marriage even between the two races, but practically they have never ceased to resent the action of those very few individuals of the race, particularly the men, who have chosen to cross the colour line for wives. To the race as a whole it constitutes active disloyalty to the Negro race itself, as well as a reflection on its womanhood. In a word, though Negroes believe in the validity of their right to do so and resent its legal prohibition, even to the point of resisting its enactment, the average member of the race is too proud to marry across the colour line; for in those states where there is no legal bar to intermarriage

of the races the number of such marriages is almost negligible.

The increasing tendency among Negroes is to build up their own social life in the midst of the common national existence. It is not conceived of as wholly separate and distinct: it is rather determined by the character and extent of local sentiment and develops most along the lines where contact between the races is accompanied by unpleasantness or friction. It is thus that a distinctly racial life along broad general lines is more highly developed in the South than in any other section of the country.

Much is said to-day about Negro life in Harlem, the distinctively Negro section of New York City, but the development in this section is confined almost wholly to the social and cultural side of life. On the more substantial side of things almost any city in the South will reveal more extensive development of distinctively Negro enterprises than is to be found in this now famous section of Gotham. In the unromantic activities of daily life, Negroes in the North move with freedom and supply their wants without much embarrassment. For this reason there is no Negro bank in New York City, though it has the largest Negro population of any centre in the world. Business in the North among Negroes is still conducted for the most part by white people—Jews, Italians, Greeks, and the Irish; but when the Negro is denied a channel for the expression of his own personality

or is subjected to injustices and embarrassments in satisfying his needs, the tendency is to construct the necessary facilities to this end on their own initiative. Churches, schools, restaurants, theatres, shoe stores, millinery shops, beauty parlours, banks, insurance companies, owned and operated by Negroes, are all a reflection of the restriction and frequent humiliation to which the Negro is subjected in the ordinary channels of American life. It is under this impulse that the Negro is constructing his own life and finding a clue to the maze of American prejudices wherever they exist. It serves a twofold advantage: it lessens the friction between the two races and at the same time provides the opportunity for a freer development of the Negro's latent capacities.

Automobiles reduce the friction and the contacts of travel at the same time that they give the Negro a full share in the democracy of the motor car. Negro insurance companies not only give protection to the families of the race, in many instances denied them otherwise, but give training in business to Negro youth and provide capital for the further development of Negro commercial enterprises. When the Negro found no place in Hollywood there sprang up companies that made a specialty of Negro pictures. Denied admission into white hotels, Negroes began to build their own, and so all along the line. All of this means that new forces are constantly arising within the Negro race itself which are making for the

satisfactory adjustment of his relations with his white neighbours, forces of a character that not only constantly increase the Negro's confidence in his own capacity and assurance of his own ultimate emergence from the present difficulties, but that also tend to alter the popular American estimate of the Negro and, to the same extent, banish the prejudices that are at the foundation of the injustices and discriminations from which the Negro suffers.

A singer like Roland Hayes, an actor like Paul Robeson, composers like S. Coleridge Taylor, Harry Burleigh, Nathaniel Dett, have an incalculable influence in effectually and at the same time insensibly removing prejudices. Florence Mills, Bert Williams, Sissle and Blake, Miller and Lyles reveal the Negro in rôles of rhythmic grace but clean humour that give a new impress to the word Negro. Windham Brothers, contractors; Spalding, in insurance; Herndon, barber; Suggs and Terry, realtors; Mrs. Maggie L. Walker, Anthony Overton, Jesse Binga, William Rich, bankers, carry with them a suggestion of efficiency and integrity whose credit is accepted in business circles by a number much larger than their own race. The names of Hall, Williams, Wright, Roberts, Kenney, and Vincent, medical men of outstanding achievement; and Carver, Just, and Parsons, scientists, carry no association of colour in the clinic and laboratory,

but their race nevertheless gains an added measure of respect because of their achievements.

DuBois, Braithwaite, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Hughes, Locke are names unqualified by race in circles where beauty of diction and poignancy of expression are judged by universal standards; but they have served also to open the door for others of their race whose colour might otherwise debar them from opportunity in spite of the merit of their work.

And after these there is coming a host of youths, no longer trammelled as their forefathers, who grasped scant opportunity in its fleeting hour, believing in themselves and in the future, rising here and there above the drab line of the common horizon—these of a younger generation are revealing, in their unabashed accomplishments, the latent capacities, hitherto repressed, that must inevitably win for them and their people ungrudging access to the larger opportunities of unbounded America and ungrudging place in the family of races and nations. Whenever such a Negro appears—and they are to be found in unsuspected places, in city and town, village and hamlet, even in the remote country places—wherever such a Negro appears, he is writing a new name for his race—Negro with a capital "N," and American without a hyphen.

While these and similar developments are taking place among Negroes, significant changes are taking place

among white people in their attitude toward the Negro. Perhaps no one thing is more arresting than the fact that nowhere in our country is the Negro any longer a political issue between the major parties. Professional politicians in the light of the most recent events concede that the Negro as a campaign issue has been worn threadbare. It is scarcely possible any longer to frighten children into going to bed or being good with the "black boogey man." The face that smiles out of the "Cream of Wheat" ad tells a different story. Even the children know the Negro too well to be any longer afraid of him.

It is a striking fact that, in the recrudescence of the Ku Klux Klan, the least important of its activities were those directed against Negroes; and in turn Negroes were least disturbed over its existence. On the other hand, there is an increasing tendency on the part of politicians to get the Negro to divide his vote between the major parties; and in certain places in the South there has been a deliberate encouragement of the registration of Negro voters, albeit not indiscriminately.

Since the war, Negro education is being taken seriously by public officials. Significant indications of this change are the school improvement programme for Negroes in Coahoma County, Mississippi, which includes an agricultural high school and fifty new school buildings; the fact that state superintendents of education throughout the South are demanding college graduates for teachers

in Negro high schools; that state colleges for Negroes are made colleges in fact as well as in name; that state appropriations for Negro education in some instances are multiplied three and four times over preceding years; that state colleges for whites in this section conduct courses in sociology covering the problems of race relationships; that white students in conference have insisted upon giving the race question precedence over all other discussions on the programme; that these same students voluntarily organize themselves for full and frank discussion of race relations and actively combatting racial discrimination.

There is truly a new day in America when white students elect a Negro girl as vice president of their conference and the protest of the conservatives is voted down by delegates from the same section as the objectors. Things have moved far when a group of schoolboys in conference wire the principal of a Negro institution to permit a young man representing that school to remain with them a week longer that they may hear more about the Negro's side of the race question. When Harvard University officially declared against race discrimination in its dormitories the decision carried with it something of the force of a declaration by the United States Supreme Court, though on a question which the Court has declared to be beyond its jurisdiction. New forces are at work, creating a new interest in the Negro and a new attitude toward the problems of race relations.

A feature of Negro life that is assuming importance is the gathering of large numbers of men and women from all parts of the country in annual conventions, conferences, and assemblies. The railroads are beginning to give the same attention to these groups as to any other of their patrons. Special agents of the road consult the officials of these gatherings and proffer the very best service at the disposal of their companies. Negroes appear like other people when a special train arrives in the city composed entirely of Pullman sleepers, with an accompanying representative of the road who gives every thought and attention for their comfort and satisfaction. It is not long since the city of Richmond, without hesitancy or solicitation and quite spontaneously, officially set aside its segregation ordinances and opened street cars, taxis, restaurants, and soda fountains, and even the porches of private homes on the line of march, to the unrestricted use of the visiting delegates to the annual convention of a great Negro fraternal organization that brought to the city the largest number of visitors ever received in its history. And there were no apologies for this generous act of courtesy and hospitality. Indeed, the city was proud of its gracious gesture of good will, and its local papers unblushingly heralded the news and invited all citizens of the community to share in the cordial welcome.

Of similar import was the action of the Committee of

Thirty-three on reorganization of the Y. M. C. A. representing all sections of the country, in changing the place of its meeting when it was discovered that the hotels of Washington would not entertain the Committee without either segregating the one Negro member of the Committee or segregating the whole Committee with this one member. The meeting was forthwith transferred to another city where no such discrimination would be involved —and the action of the Committee in making the change was unanimous.

Many lynchings are to-day prevented by thoughtful precautions and by the downright courage of public officials, but that is not all. Negroes have been acquitted of the charge of rape by white juries, even in face of the avowed identification of the accused by the alleged victim. It is true that Negroes charged with murder and acquitted by juries have been lynched afterwards regardless; but their acquittal by a white jury in the face of such pressure of public sentiment is at this day more significant than the lynching, horrible as that is. It indicates the rise of a new and strong sense of justice that heretofore dared hardly express itself even in the courts.

Stronger still was the will to justice that in another case secured the ultimate release of a Negro student charged and convicted of rape, under circumstances that convinced the Court, the prosecution, and high-minded

impartial private citizens of his innocence of the charge. It took nearly two years for the gods to grind out this justice, but it came.

There is a new note of candour in this excerpt from an editorial on "Mobs and Civilization" in the Montgomery (Alabama) *Advertiser*:

> Both in South Carolina and in Tennessee the victims were charged with murder, not the "nameless crime." The white South is getting away from lynchings. Public opinion is turning against mobs; but public opinion has not yet turned far enough to make it uniformly unsafe for a gang of empty hotheads to take a human being out of jail and kill him before he is proved guilty of the crime charged against him. Public opinion will have to do better than that before the South can say with confidence and reason that it is civilized.

The public advocacy of anti-Negro sentiments is rapidly disappearing everywhere. Among the last efforts at hostile legislation appeared recently two bills, introduced in the Virginian legislature, the one requiring separation of the races in all places of public assembly among Negroes as well as among whites, and the second a blanket prohibition of intermarriage where there was any evidence whatever of any other than white blood in the ancestral lineage. The first bill was opposed actively by many of the leading newspapers of the state as wholly unnecessary and finally became a law without the governor's signature; the second failed to pass the upper house of the legislature. Such action points to another method than agitation for making interracial adjustments. These

and many other happenings like them—and they could be multiplied indefinitely—point to a decided and significant change in public sentiment among white Americans on the subject of the Negro's place in American life, behind all of which is a growing liberality in private thinking.

The recent political campaign, however, was accompanied by a resurgence of anti-Negro diatribes from the platform which was significant chiefly for its irrelevancy to the issues involved. They were reminiscent of past reconstruction days and were engaged in, strangely enough, by representatives of both the major parties, mostly older men who came to power by such tactics a generation ago when vilification of the Negro was part of the political stock-in-trade of the more ambitious and less scrupulous candidates who regarded themselves the ordained defenders and preservers of white supremacy.

So rabid did this form of attack become in this last campaign that it elicited strong and concerted protests from both races in declarations signed by representatives of all shades of political faith. Negroes were a unit in their "Appeal to America" publicly to "repudiate this campaign of racial hatred." From the white South came the "call of University presidents, business leaders, ministers, and others prominent in the life of the South to every right thinking man and woman among us to disclaim,

discourage and discountenance such appeals to prejudice and fear to the end that the gains of recent years in interracial good will and understanding may not be sacrificed to the passing interest of a political campaign." Such a fundamental agreement between the leaders of both races upon the principles and the application of right and justice at the time of their most flagrant violation, and the public challenge to a better way far outweighs in hopeful significance the sinister import of the spasm of vituperation against which it was directed.

It will be generally testified by Negroes that there is far less hostility manifest in contacts between individuals of the two races than formerly. There is good evidence in the fact that the word "nigger" is rarely heard in public on the lips of white people; there appears to be a genuine precaution that Negroes should not overhear it and children are even rebuked for the unguarded use of the word. Even the asperities of segregation are sometimes mitigated by an accompanying smile of deprecation that deplores its necessity and ridicules its absurdity.

More important still is the growing volume of positively helpful contacts between individuals of the two races fraught with understanding and sympathy. The progressive advancement of the Negro has made possible the increase of such contacts. So long as the Negro was only poor and ignorant and dependent there was little in his life to offer points of contact with a more privi-

leged group. Training and development have altered this. Every Negro of consequence has real friends among white people, whose friendship and interest are not a condescending sympathy but an appreciation of worth in character and achievement along lines of common interest. Professional men exchange experiences; social workers meet to consider cases; business men have substantial connections, financial and otherwise; teachers meet occasionally, at least for public addresses; perhaps the clergy as a group are farther apart than any, perhaps because the minister is so directly exposed to the pressure of public sentiment.

The Negro minister has far wider contacts among whites of all classes than the white minister has among Negroes. As a class, white ministers appear to have fewer contacts with Negroes than any group of their race. But they, too, are breaking across the barrier, and the young white minister to-day rather seeks to cultivate an acquaintance with Negro life and to find some avenue of helpful service in the tasks of racial adjustment. All such people are discovering that they have nothing to lose and much to gain by making Negroes comfortable and happy, as well as secure in their person and property and hopeful in their outlook for the future well-being of their homes and families.

It is from these individual contacts that one gets the impression that the vast majority of white people in all

sections of this country stand ready to give the Negro fair and just consideration and an equal opportunity when once the shell of tradition is broken and the power of an aggressive minority can be counteracted. Travellers from other lands say that public opinion is more dominating in America than anywhere else in the world. That, perhaps, is the habit of democracy, but in nothing is it more dominating in America than in the matter of relations between the two races. Privately a white man may hold some individual black man in the highest esteem and treat him with the utmost consideration; but under the stress of public sentiment this white man may see his black friend in a public place and all but ignore his presence. It is the weight of traditional sentiment that more than anything else hampers a just and satisfactory adjustment of the relations between the two races in this country.

In the face of it honest hearts grow indignant at abuse and outrage, but they still remain silent; sensitive consciences protest what is manifestly unjust and even dishonest, but the protest seldom crystallizes into action. This dread of what his neighbour may think more than anything else appears to paralyze the white man in America when it comes to public dealings with the Negro. This is true from the lowest circles to the highest, from the weakest to the strongest. Congressmen and senators are notoriously sensitive to the currents of public sentiment;

and not even the Presidency is exempt from attempts at such pressure. Perhaps it is a reaction from the anti-slavery agitation preceding the Civil War, but the apathy of the leaders of public thought on the question of the Negro in the last fifty years is in marked contrast to the forthright utterances and attitudes of the preceding generation. Thinking in the large, it may be well to have let the public agitation on this question subside while passions cooled, till thinking could again become clear and straight and sane.

It would seem that we have about reached that place. Nowhere do the indications point more clearly in that direction than in the South, where the status of the Negro was and is such a vital issue. There have been all along solitary voices crying in the wilderness, as it were, in protest against injustices to the Negro and proclaiming the essential injury to the white race that is done by those who would establish supremacy upon a foundation of discrimination and oppression. During the past decade the number of these voices has been multiplied. They are raised more frequently and, more significant still, they are listened to with more and more of attention and sympathy. Here and there they are directing councils and determining the policy of those in whose power the lot of the Negro is cast.

In Atlanta, Ashby Jones, Mrs. Luke Johnson, John

Eagan, Plato Durham, C. B. Wilmer, Ex-Governor Dorsey, W. W. Alexander, and others like them, have spoken with frankness and courage out of their hearts and consciences in a challenge to practise the democracy and establish the liberty that was our proud boast during the war. In Virginia there are S. C. Mitchell, Mrs. B. B. Mumford, J. H. Blackwell, John Stewart Bryan, Douglas Freeman, Southgate Leigh, and others like them, all steeped in the finest traditions of the South, now throwing the weight of those traditions in the balance for good will, honest dealing and equal opportunity for the black man. In Memphis, Bolton Smith takes time from his business to work out a finer civilization in which black men shall not sneer at the standards and professions of white men with power. In this same spirit S. C. Mooney made the Commercial Appeal a forum and advocate of a new order after the same sort. In Alabama Mrs. J. H. McCoy, Mrs. J. H. Cranford, Dr. James E. Dillard, and Bishop William G. McDowell are carrying on in the same spirit amid what are sometimes great difficulties. In other parts of the South Julian Harris, of the Columbus (Ga.) *Enquirer-Sun*, W. B. Bizzell of Oklahoma, W. S. Sutton and Mrs. J. D. Ames of Texas, Mrs. C. T. McGowan of South Carolina, Bishop Theodore D. Bratton of Mississippi, and a host of others in every state do not hesitate to be known as standing on the side of justice and equity for the Negro.

So in every part of the South are to be found such groups of strong, courageous, and at the same time sober-minded men and women who are the heralds of a new way for black and white to live together.

They are actively preaching the gospel of good will and coöperation between the races, deliberately striving to change old sentiments and to establish new ideas as well as a more generous spirit in all matters affecting the welfare of the Negro.

Others again with means and power in their hands, having local situations under their control, are putting into practice a new programme in dealing with Negroes in their employ. Planters and manufacturers, lumbermen and contractors, they concern themselves not only to secure the maximum of production from their employees, but also to make their surroundings comfortable and wholesome, to encourage the establishment of permanent homes, and to place before them an inviting outlook with opportunities for advancement and for steady improvement along all lines—health, recreation, housing, sanitation, education, saving, morals, and religion. All these things receive attention as they affect their Negro employees not only as part of the economy of production but as a proper expression of human sympathies.

Such is the leaven that is permeating the life of the South and reacting upon every part of the country in its attitude toward the Negro. Passing the stage of experi-

ment, it is tending to become more and more a conviction that the white man has nothing whatever to lose in giving to the Negro the unhampered opportunity to develop the best that is in him; indeed, such communities are developing a distinct pride in the achievements of the Negro in their midst. Instead of carrying visitors to the slums they now carry them to the new high school that the city has erected for its Negro children, to the model laundry where the drudgery has been taken out of washing and ironing, to the Negro bank that is encouraging thrift and economy among the coloured people of the city to the increase of the deposits in all the banks, to the Negro residence and business sections. Where fairs are held, both county and state, the programme is often regarded as incomplete without an exhibit by Negroes and a day set apart for speeches, contests, distribution of prizes, and such other features as accompany the exhibits of white patrons. In additions to all this unorganized activity there are direct movements indigenous to the South, seeking to remould public opinion and to secure direct action in those things that have created friction between the races and thus hindered the progress of the entire section and exposed it to the gibes and reproaches, however hypocritical, of the rest of the country.

The latest, and it may yet prove to be the strongest influence brought to bear on this question, is the activity of women's clubs representative of the best and strongest

womanhood in the South. For a long while white women of the South have been silent concerning things they have seen with their own eyes and against which their hearts burned with indignation. But with the emancipation that has come to womanhood in the ballot their voices are raised in repudiation of a chivalry that would defend their honour with lawlessness and murder. In a previous chapter mention has been made of organizations that have placed themselves on record as demanding the same chivalrous regard for the protection of Negro womanhood as for their own, and unhesitatingly denounced as hypocritical the attitude that would surround white womanhood with every protection of the law while deliberately leaving Negro womanhood still exposed to a laxity of sentiment that regards only lightly the delinquency of youth that crosses the colour line.

The Church in the South, of every denomination, is becoming increasingly aggressive in its demand for a genuinely Christian attitude and programme in race relations. The programme of these bodies is not confined to works of mercy and charity in alleviating suffering and helping the unfortunate. They feel it their duty also to challenge the Christian conscience of their whole body of adherents to practise in daily contacts the principles to which they subscribe as disciples of Jesus Christ.

All of these forces may be said to have crystallized in what is popularly known as the Interracial Commission.

While including both races in its personnel this body is essentially the organized conscience of the forward-looking white South to place the relations of the two races in this section upon the highest plane of justice, equity, and honour. It aims first of all to have the South consider with open mind the elements of the problem presented by the Negro in its midst. It aims to bring out the facts of the Negro's status, his shortcomings as well as his excellencies and achievements; to bring to the light of day the many secret practices oppressive to the individual Negro which he is powerless to resist and concerning which the Negro himself cannot get a hearing; and finally, where public opinion and the law already guarantee to the Negro a measure of justice and fair dealing, to see to it as a matter of conscience that those charged with this responsibility discharge their duty to the Negro without evasion or equivocation.

Under the name of the Interracial Commission, or, officially, the Commission on Interracial Coöperation, this movement represents the conscience of the South moving forward to purge itself and the section of whatever reproach may be fairly brought against it as regards its practice in dealing with the Negro. Just as the conscience of the nation, North and South, moved against slavery to its final eradication, so are we witnessing in this movement the development of a new national conscience in dealing with the Negro as a free man. For this

method of bringing black and white together in unofficial conference for the frank consideration of differences has already been extended into every state and most of the counties of the South, and is now extending also to other states, particularly those that have received a large influx of Negro population in the industrial adjustments coming with the World War and after. In this instance the movement is launched not as an assault from the outside but as a confession from within that all is not as it should be; it is not one section coming to another section espousing the cause of a third party; it is instead the aggrieved parties themselves—the white man and the black man—meeting in peaceful conference, but with utmost candour, first of all to understand one another and then to work out a programme of coöperation up to the point of understanding, leaving to the future the handling of such problems as may still prove too difficult to approach.

In yet another direction does the movement have a new significance. When the North alone undertook to deal with the problem of the Negro a war ensued, from the effects of which the country as a whole has not even yet fully recovered. When emancipation was achieved the Negro was practically turned over to the South to deal with. The South launched upon a programme of anti-Negro legislation culminating in disfranchisement and

segregation on railroads, in school, and residences. But except for the recent flare-up in Virginia of which most thoughtful Virginians are ashamed, and a somewhat similar one in Georgia, this period seems to be at an end.

We are now coming to deal with the Negro not by legislation but by commission whereon both parties to the cause are represented. By this method a full hearing is secured for all the facts. The principle of action by common agreement is observed, rather than by majority control, as in the case of legislation; for there are elements about the question of race relations that are not amenable to satisfactory adjustment by legislation.

In our country there is as wide a diversity of sentiment and opinion on the race question as there is on any other question; and even in the South sentiments are as varied as are communities and states. Negroes know those cities where local sentiment is tolerant and sympathetic. There are other places even in the same state where there are great bitterness between the races and frequent outbreaks of violence. One state will make the most liberal appropriations for education or for Negro welfare, while an adjoining state may be comparatively neglectful of these matters.

It would seem that the country is at last convinced that the political platform is no place for the discussion of a subject that enters so intimately into the lives of both

black and white, and that professional politicians are no more to be trusted with the wise handling of race relations than they are with railroad tariffs and educational policies. Judging from its work up to this time the commission plan of dealing with all phases of race relations, with government sanction, would be welcomed by both races as the next step in the adjustment of the inevitable contacts between all races on American soil.

With the recent restriction of immigration, the Negro has become an indispensable factor in the economic life of America, not only in the South but increasingly so in all parts of the country. As an industrial factor he seems to be found more satisfactory than the European immigrant. Socially he does not present nearly so great a problem in the adjustment to American standards. The chief trouble with him seems to be that he refuses to be less than an American. At the same time he is adaptable, and in the face of resistance is rather given to compromise, as his whole history in America up to this time would indicate. It would therefore appear to be much the simplest procedure to handle the various aspects of his status in American society by conference and adjustment rather than by legislation in the heat of agitation that rarely if ever expresses the wisest thought or the best sentiment on either side, especially since legislatures as at present constituted have the Negro so effectively barred, at the

same time keeping always in mind the ultimate goal of equal opportunity with all other Americans.

Amid all the agitation and discussion there is one factor touching the problem of racial adjustments in the South that represents an incalculable advance. This is that the white man and the black man are meeting face to face in the consideration of these matters that affect their common welfare. This is a distinct and fundamental gain. Until recent years the Negro could not get a hearing in the South. Newspapers felt it undesirable to publish a letter from a Negro unless it was one in praise of existing conditions. Rarely did a group of business men care to listen to what a black man had to say on any of these industrial or economic problems; seldom did legislative committees invite a Negro to present the side of his race in a question involving public appropriations. The white man, in short, felt he had nothing to learn from the Negro on the race question or any other. No wonder the Negro turned to the North. Northern audiences would listen to his grievances; Northern newspapers would publish his complaints; Northern politicians would sponsor legislation in his behalf, and all the while the South remained deaf. Such a condition no longer obtains. In no part of the country has the Negro more consistent or more courageous advocates of his cause than he has among the editors of certain leading journals in the South. It is

the South that is to-day taking the lead in the discussion of the race question, and the Negro is invited to state his side of the case for himself.

Events since the World War have given a new setting to the race problem. The successive decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States touching the status of the Negro under the Constitution would seem to have opened the way for a new order of statesmanship in the South. The vast physical resources of the section, the available supply of labour, the expanding markets of the world are a challenge to the genius of some broad-minded, far-visioned leader to wake the South from its nightmare over the Negro and show the way to a constructive order of civilization, which can employ the energies and capacities of both races without sacrificing the opportunities or integrity of either, a model to the rest of the world. This is distinctly a task for a Southern white man. In such a task he will find the Negro his most loyal ally.

What has surprised most of those who have come to know him, is the moderation of the Negro's desires. Many have discovered with surprise his very great patience in the presence of gross abuses. They have found that the Negro loves the South and really wants to regard the white man of the South as his friend. They find too that the Negro can be led by the white politician of the South as

readily as by the white politician of the North; and they have found also that the idea of Negro domination is a political scarecrow, unworthy of intelligent constructive statesmanship.

With the vistas of prosperity opening before the country the two races appear to be more and more essential to each other's development. For all that the Negro has accomplished so much to-day, there is a definite limit to his achievements without the practical support and coöperation of the white man. The experience which the latter has already gained and the hold which he has upon the resources and organization of society make it impossible for the Negro to make any considerable advance without his assistance.

On the other hand, the larger opportunities that open before our country at home and abroad make it equally impossible for the white man to reap the waiting harvest without the labours and assistance of the black man. As things are happening in the world to-day America has in the Negro an asset of indispensable value. Bound together by ties of a common suffering and sacrifice in times of national distress it is unthinkable that these two elements should be anything else than allies in whatever undertaking they may face in the future. Meanwhile nothing can contribute more toward the permanent establishment of our national welfare than the continued effort to realize for the humblest in our national life, whether black

or white, that full measure of justice and equal opportunity for which America stands as a symbol before all the world. To this task thousands of the noblest spirits of our country are dedicated. It is such as these that make one, regardless of race, proud to be an American.

THE END

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